CHICAGO'S FREE WEEKLY SINCE 1971 | AUGUST 15, 2019

READER

Feed the Soul

Good food, drink, and cannabis for bad times

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THIS WEEK

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On the cover: Photo by Michael Salisbury. For more of Salisbury's work, go to msalisbu.com.

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A moving memorial to the 1919 race riots

Artist Jefferson Pinder's *Float* made volunteers of different races and the lake itself part of his commemoration.

In 2020, the White Sox get to play the Yankees in a cornfield in Iowa

Once again, Sox fans get screwed.

Movie Tuesday: Doggiewoggiez! Poochiewoochiez!

In honor of the *Reader*'s Pets Issue, here are five films with plenty of cinematic canine charisma.

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ISA GIALLORENZO

STREET VIEW

The maximalist

"The more color the better," says artist/Google UX designer Adrianne Hawthorne.

"I NEVER FOLLOW THE NORM," says Adrianne Hawthorne, 33, of Ponnopozz, who was displaying her artwork on a rental truck parked on Damen just north of Lawrence. "I like to show my work in fun environments that are a real experience for the people who attend my shows. A moving truck seemed like a great option because it's only ever used for one purpose, and that's never an art show!"

A Google user experience designer by day, Hawthorne decided in February 2018 to refocus on her art to "express her true self" and adopted the label Ponnopozz—a portmanteau of Ponno and Pozzer, the names of two stuffed bears she had as a child—to that end. Her work, like her personal style, is maximalist and colorful: "The more color the better," she says. It's an aesthetic reflected in her pairing of a T-shirt dress and leggings by LA's Nooworks, pink statement glasses and shoes, a floral fanny pack, and earrings by local brand Lee Lee Z Leather.

"Mixing patterns definitely works, and you can never have too much color," Hawthorne says. "Wear what makes you feel amazing as you walk down the street." **—Isa Giallorenzo**

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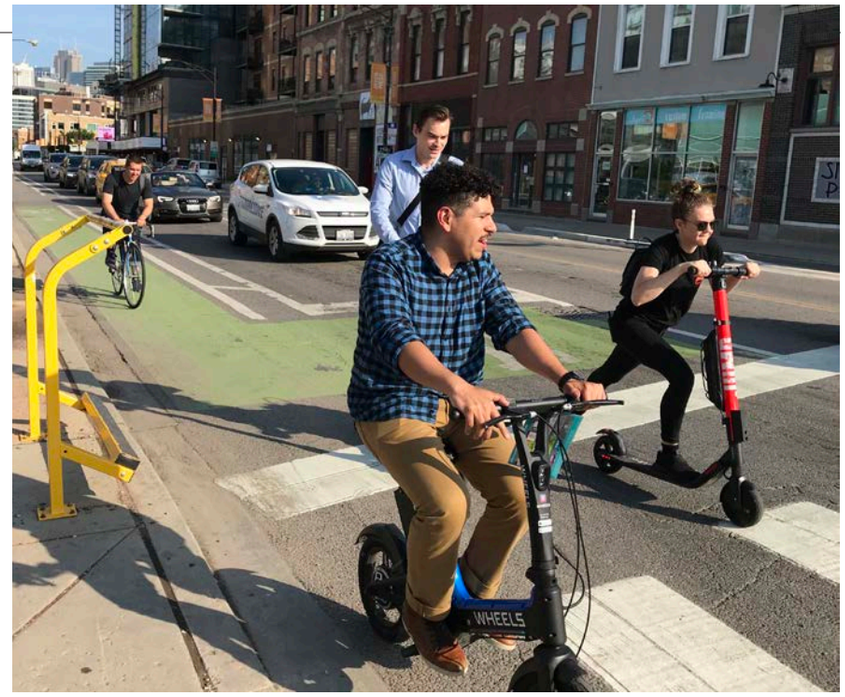
TRANSPORTATION

Not-so-easy riders

What can cities do to make e-scooters safer?

By John Greenfield



Scooter riders on Milwaukee Avenue in West Town JOHN GREENFIELD

Thankfully, I haven't heard about any critical injuries to riders of Chicago's rentable electric scooters since the city's pilot program launched on June 15. Since then, 2,500 vehicles from ten different companies have been scattered across the west- and northwest-side test zone.

But Dr. Adam Black, who runs the emergency department at AMITA Health Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center in Ukrainian Village, a hot spot for the gadgets, says his ER has seen "some really ugly fractures" from e-scooter crashes. These have included broken hips, compound fractures (in which the end of a broken bone protrudes through the victim's skin), and "one really unlucky rider with multiple extremities with fractures." Black estimated that the medical center is currently treating one scooter patient a day. He said most of the victims were struck by turning drivers who didn't notice them, or they wiped out on potholes or other bumps in the road.

My goal in sharing this info isn't to scare you away from the new technology; it's to make sure we all keep our eyes wide open to its negative impacts. I actually think e-scooters have many possible benefits for cities like Chicago. They have the potential to replace private car and ride-hailing trips, especially on first- and last-mile journeys to and from transit stations. They can improve transportation access in underserved neighborhoods. And they may be helpful in building political support for more protected, car-free lanes, since their zippy, sweat-free rides may appeal to folks who would never consider bike commuting.

To get a sense of the relative safety of bike-share systems like Chicago's Divvy versus rentable scooters, I pored over news reports and compiled what I believe are the most comprehensive lists of apparently unintentional U.S. fatalities (e.g., excluding two Citi Bike users who died in a 2017 New York terrorist attack) for each mode to date.

Since large-scale bike share launched in this country in September 2010, the following fatalities have occurred.

JULY 1, 2016: Virginia Murray, 25, was riding a Divvy at Belmont and Sacramento in Chicago when a turning flatbed truck driver struck her.

JUNE 11, 2017: Dan Hanegby, 36, was riding a Citi Bike in New York when a bus driver struck him.

MARCH 8, 2019: Tess Rothstein, 30, was riding an electrical-assist Ford GoBike in San Francisco when a box truck driver fatally struck her.

JUNE 4, 2019: Victor Ang died from injuries sustained in April when he was riding a Citi Bike in New York and a UPS semi driver struck him.

Large-scale scooter share appeared on U.S. sidewalks by January 2018. Since then, the following scooter-share deaths have occurred.

FEBRUARY 1, 2018: Mark Sands, 21, was riding a Lime scooter against traffic in Austin, Texas, when an Uber driver struck him.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2018: Jacoby Stoneking, 24, was riding a Lime scooter in Dallas when he fell and was later found unresponsive in the road with a head injury.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018: Carlos Sanchez-Martin, 20, was riding a Lime scooter in Washington, D.C., when an SUV driver struck him.

DECEMBER 22, 2018: Esteban Galindo, 26, was riding a Bird scooter in Chula Vista, California, when a car driver struck him.

MARCH 13, 2019: Christopher Conti, 53, was killed in San Diego when he crashed into a tree while riding a Bird scooter on the sidewalk.

APRIL 5, 2019: Evan Dyer Faram, 31, was riding a rented scooter in LA when an intoxicated hit-and-run pickup driver struck him.

APRIL 23, 2019: Caiden Reyes-Ortiz, 5, was riding on a Lime scooter with his mother in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when he fell off and a car driver struck him.

MAY 16, 2019: Brady Gaulke, 26, was riding a Bird scooter in Nashville with a blood-alcohol level of more than twice the legal limit when an SUV driver struck him.

MAY 16, 2019: Eric Amis, Jr., 20, was riding a Lime scooter in Atlanta when a car driver struck him.

JULY 17, 2019: William "Brad" Alexander, 37, was riding a Bird scooter in Atlanta when a turning bus driver struck him.

JULY 27, 2019: Amber Ford, 34, was riding a Bird scooter in Atlanta when a hit-and-run driver struck her.

AUGUST 6: Quienterry McGriff was riding a scooter in the Atlanta suburb of East Point, Georgia, when he ran a red light and collided with an oil truck.

AUGUST 9: Cameron Hagan, 26, died from injuries sustained five days earlier when he was riding a Lyft scooter against traffic in Denver and a car driver struck him.

Since U.S. bike share has seen four unintentional deaths in about nine years, while there have been 13 such rentable scooter fatalities in roughly 19.5 months, that means there have been about 18 times as many scooter fatalities per year as bike-share deaths.

Granted, that's not a true apples-to-apples comparison, but even if we look at trip data, scooters still have an exponentially worse safety record. According to data from the National Association of City Transportation Officials, between 2010 and 2018 there was roughly one death per 84.25 million bike-share trips. Meanwhile, in 2018, the first year of large-scale scooter share, there was about one fatality per 9.63 million trips—roughly nine times the fatality rate of bike share.

Scooter advocates may take issue with the nuts and bolts of my analysis. But with nine unintentional U.S. e-scooter deaths so far this year alone, it's clear that scooters have a terrible track record for safety compared to bike share. (Although, in fairness, studies have found private bikes are also somewhat less safe than bike share.) The reasons why seem fairly obvious.

Traditional bike-share cycles are heavy and slow, while typical e-scooters do 15 mph with no effort from the rider. The bikes are stable and give the rider a low center of gravity, while a person standing on a scooter can easily fly over the handlebars. Bike-share cycles have large wheels with fat tires, while the small wheels on most scooters are prone to crashes on poor pavement.

The high-visibility bikes are easy for drivers to see, while a person on a scooter is less noticeable to motorists, especially from the side. And while many bike-share users have years of experience navigating city traffic, almost no scooter riders do.

It must be noted that the current citywide Divvy expansion is phasing in e-bikes that have an electrical assist that allows them to top off at 18 mph, which could lead to more crashes. And many of the problems with standing scooters could be addressed by switching to seated models with larger wheels. In fact, that describes the vehicles used by Wheels, one of the companies participating in the Chicago pilot.

More education and outreach about safe scooter riding practices could also help level the playing field. The city of Chicago recently announced a series of new safety training sessions.

It's also important to remember that unsafe driving is Chicago's most urgent traffic safety problem, with 41 people walking and five people on bikes fatally struck in 2018. By replacing car trips, scooters can be part of the solution—as long they're preventing more injuries and deaths than they're causing.

"More time and data is needed for a thorough understanding of e-scooter safety," noted Active Transportation Alliance spokesman Kyle Whitehead. But he added that building more car-free lanes would be a win for both cyclists and scooteristas. "The scooter injuries further demonstrate the need to redesign city streets and provide more protected space for vulnerable users."

John Greenfield edits the transportation news website Streetsblog Chicago.
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CANNABIS

Legalizing equity

Advocates say the adult-use cannabis legislation doesn't go far enough to help diverse entrepreneurs enter the budding market.

By Tatiana Walk-Morris

JACQUELINE ALCÁNTARA

If not for CBD, Marcy Capron Vermillion wouldn't have been able to stand on her own.

After injuring her spine in a kayaking accident, she had trouble standing without leaning on anything. The cortisone shots and other treatments weren't working, and she was left contemplating surgery. A couple of years ago, around her 30th birthday, her aunt gave her a bottle of ResQ organics cannabidiol, or CBD, oil. Only a few days after she consumed the CBD, she felt optimistic, a surprise for her as a person who'd suffered from clinical depression for a decade. Thankfully, her back pain had been greatly reduced.

From then on, she "got really religious" about CBD, experimenting and researching. A year later, she met serial entrepreneur Coco Meers, and together the two founded Equilibria, a women-focused CBD wellness product company.

Vermillion is one of many Illinoisans watching how the cannabis sector evolves now that the state legislature passed HB1438, which legalizes adult cannabis consumption and includes provisions for cannabis conviction expungements and resources for diverse entrepreneurs. While the bill somewhat lowers the barrier to entry to the cannabis industry, some worry that it gives the mostly white cultivators and dispensary owners an edge in the budding marketplace. Advocates also say it doesn't go far enough in its cannabis conviction expungement provisions, and could lead to discrimination against POC cannabis consumers.

It's difficult to determine just how homogenous Illinois's legal cannabis market is. The Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act has provisions that require medical and adult-use cannabis companies to disclose their ownership demographics, but the diversity of the state's current market has largely been concealed. Under the state's medical marijuana law, agencies are forbidden from disclosing the contents of cultivation centers and dispensary application information.

To understand how many diverse applicants were denied entry into the state's cannabis market, the *Reader* filed FOIA requests for figures outlining how many dispensary and cultivation center applications the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and the Illinois Department of Agriculture had denied from people of color, women, veterans,

and people with disabilities.

The IDFPR denied the *Reader*'s request for records, citing the law's prohibition of application information disclosure, but the Illinois Department of Agriculture said it had denied 22 applications from women, 11 from people of color, nine from veterans, and none from people with disabilities.

"We cannot speak to the decision of the previous administration to not track the demographics of dispensary applicants in a more consistent manner," an IDFPR spokesperson said in an e-mail. "The focus of this administration is to have the best data possible to track minority participation in the cannabis industry and to promote policies that remove barriers to entry for those communities."

The IDFPR spokesperson confirmed that about 4 percent of people with ownership stakes in cannabis dispensaries operating in the state are people of color, but the current law prevents the department from sharing their identities.

When asked whether the Illinois Department of Agriculture had made efforts to assist diverse entrepreneurs in establishing cultivation centers, the IDA spokesperson said the department couldn't provide assistance to any permit applicants in order to "ensure the integrity of this competitive selection process."

Some worry that the current cannabis companies will have too much power to expand. Current dispensaries aren't in predominantly Black or Hispanic neighborhoods, and they'll likely be able to expand into communities of color by the time craft growers and dispensaries enter the market, said Donte Townsend, communications director of Chicago NORML, a Chicago-area chapter of the national cannabis advocacy and education organization. The existing growers have the advantage of being able to stock up on plants and product, thus taking a larger share in the market, he added.

"To have 1 percent of shelf space in a dispensary, how much of a win is that?" Townsend said. "Take these crumbs, and if you can make some bread with it, a'ight."

Vermillion said existing cannabis companies with more money have the ability to lobby legislators for permission to open more dispensaries and create a monopoly. "If you decide to open a dispensary a mile away from one of theirs and you're like the mom-and-pop equivalent, they'll put you out of business easy," Vermillion said. "They'll be excited to do it."

Her instinct about the political influence of cannabis companies wasn't wrong. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that existing companies, their executives, and lobbyists have spent approximately $600,000 on political contributions since 2017.

Under the adult-use cannabis bill, existing dispensaries and cultivation centers are required to pay fees aimed at subsidizing newcomers from diverse backgrounds, including those from communities that have been upended by cannabis criminalization, said Illinois deputy governor Christian Mitchell. Existing dispensaries must pay $30,000 toward the Cannabis Regulation Fund, and existing cultivation centers must pay $100,000 to grow and sell cannabis for recreational consumption.

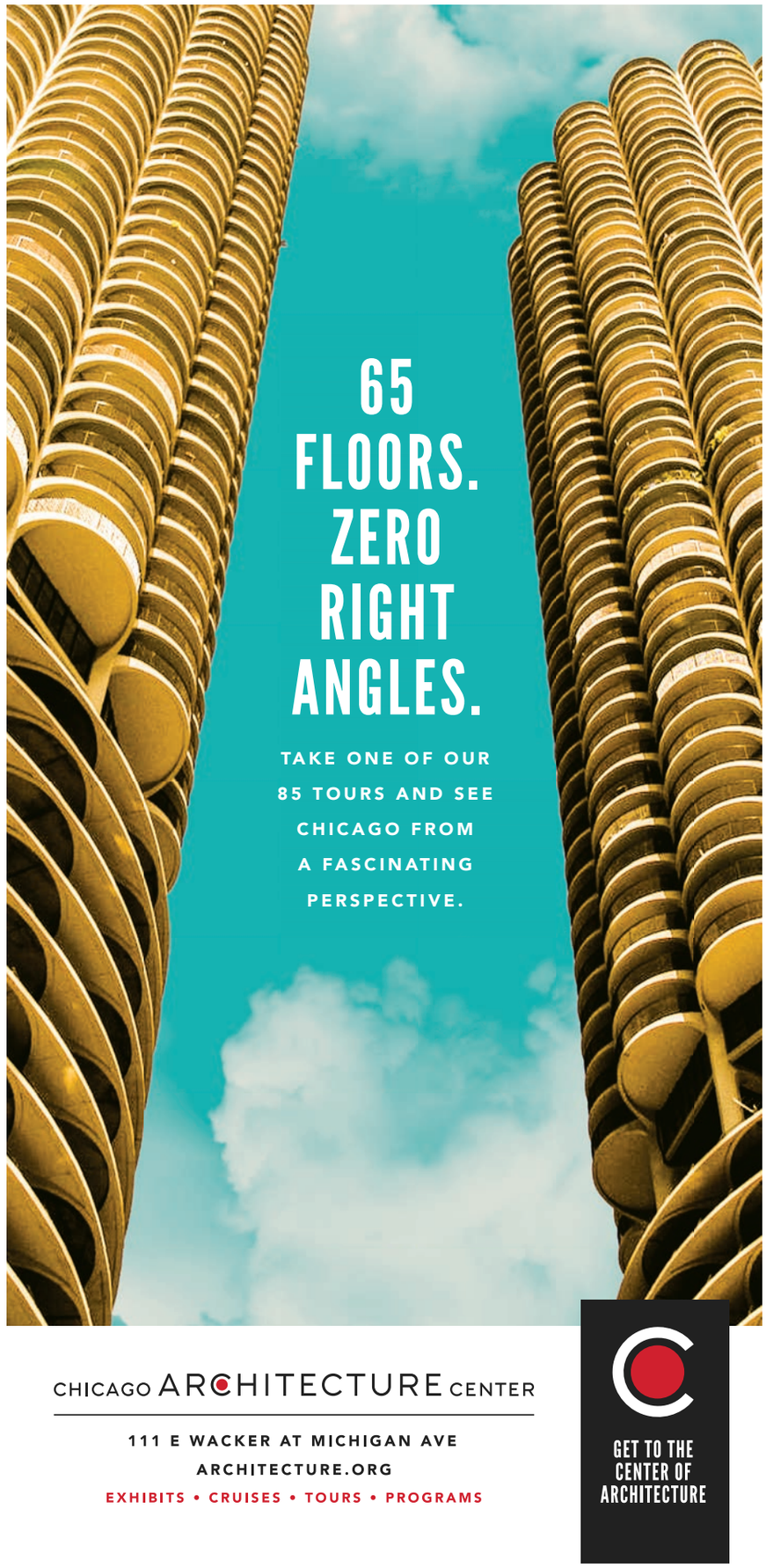
Luckily, Meers had put aside money to start a cannabis company. That funding plus Meers's personal connections enabled the company to acquire a farm for growing, researching, and developing their cannabis products. "We've been lucky that we've been able to use existing connections to raise capital and be in a place that's a little further along. But if all these things didn't come together, no, I don't think the company would exist," Vermillion said.

State representative Kelly Cassidy, the lead house sponsor of the adult-use legislation, said allowing existing cultivation centers to start growing cannabis for recreational use was the only way to ensure that there would be cannabis available by January 1, 2020. It can take a year or two for cannabis companies to find land that adheres to local zoning restrictions, not to mention that cannabis plants for recreational use will take time to grow.

Waiving 50 percent of fees for social equity applicants felt like a fair compromise between lowering the barriers of entry for disadvantaged cannabis entrepreneurs but also ensuring that they can run their business, Cassidy said. "That fee waiver is about trying to make sure that we put it in the realm of possible for folks," Cassidy said. "You do need to be able to come up with something. There does need to be skin in the game."

Though the bill provides reduced fees and financing for social equity applicants, some say establishing cultivation centers and dispensaries may still be cost prohibitive.

The funding for social equity applicants will at least curb the need for traditional bank loans. According to a 2017 Federal Reserve analysis, one in four Black-owned firms declined to apply for credit, with 56 percent of those Black-owned businesses stating ➔



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that they didn't want to rack up debt and 60 percent saying they anticipated being denied. Out of the 17.7 percent of Black-owned businesses that applied for loans, financial institutions denied 53.4 percent of their applications, the analysis also found.

Beyond the pervasive gender and racial lending gap, many banks are apprehensive about serving companies in the cannabis industry. On the day that Vermillion spoke with the *Reader*, she said her company had problems with payments processors. While the 2018 Farm Bill legalized CBD hemp farming, dispensaries have an even worse time handling their money, because they can only accept cash, she added.

The costs levied by the state to enter the industry are steep. Under the adult-use cannabis legislation, cultivation center applicants must pay a nonrefundable license fee of $100,000, plus 5 percent of their total sales between July 1, 2018, and July 1, 2019, or $500,000, whichever is less. Dispensary license applicants must pay a $60,000 licensing fee plus an application fee of $5,000. Infusers must pay a $5,000 license fee and $5,000 for the application fee. Social equity applicants will have their fees reduced by 50 percent.

Although many entrepreneurs draw on family wealth to start a business, that option may not be available for Black entrepreneurs. For one thing, a 2017 Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2013 Survey of Consumer Finance data found that white Americans have an average of $678,737 in wealth compared to $95,261 for Black Americans. Even among college degree holders, the median wealth for white Americans was $180,500 compared to $23,400 for Black Americans, and the median wealth for white Americans with graduate degrees was $293,100 compared to $84,000 for Black Americans, the analysis found. Meanwhile between 1950 and 1970, Black home buyers bought 60,100 homes purchased under predatory contracts and paid on average at least $587 more in today's dollars per month than they would've paid with FHA loans, thus losing between an estimated $3.2 billion and $4 billion in today's dollars, according to a 2019 report by the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University.

Equilibria grows its industrial hemp at a farm in Commerce City, Colorado, and began selling its initial round of CBD products last fall. Owning its own farm allows the company to maintain quality control over its product makeup, Vermillion said. Opening a dispensary but getting cannabis from another farm could potentially compromise the quality of their products while saving them money and time in the short-term, she said.

"The response from the majority of my friends in this industry was that even the loans and the subsidies and various things they're trying to do to make it equitable were not enough," Vermillion said.

As entrepreneurs prepare to descend upon the cannabis market, individuals with cannabis convictions will begin navigating the expungement process. Though the state is authorizing the mass sale of recreational cannabis, the Illinois state legislature opted to offer expungement options based on the nature of the conviction, a sign of the lingering conservatism in lawmakers' attitudes toward cannabis legalization.

For people with minor cannabis offenses, meaning violations involving 30 grams or less, law enforcement agencies will automatically erase the violation from their records. Individuals with offenses involving more than 30 grams will need to petition the court to have their record expunged, or state's attorneys can move to expunge the convictions on their own.

Both Mitchell and Cassidy pointed out the oddity of imposing separate expungement processes for more substantial cannabis offenses under the new adult-use cannabis law given that the state will allow licensed businesses to sell cannabis in large quantities.

"With any legislative measure, you have to figure out what is the most relief you can get for the most amount of people while still being able to pass the bill," Mitchell said. "For more conservative Democrats and Republican legislators who are supportive in the house and the senate, that 30-gram line of something that's now going to be affirmatively legal under this legislative measure was what made sense for those folks."

Vermillion's husband, a combat veteran who suffers from PTSD, had gotten into some legal "trouble" when he returned home and was wrongfully convicted of a crime, she said. He is currently undergoing the expungement process.

As people with cannabis convictions pursue a clean slate under the new bill, advocates and business owners say there will need to be a broader education process for both consumers and aspiring cannabis entrepreneurs.

Chicago NORML plans to continue education efforts to inform people about how they can and cannot consume and produce cannabis once the law takes effect next year, Townsend said. Under the adult-use cannabis legislation, for example, only medical patients can grow cannabis at home. That was a blow to casual cannabis consumers looking to grow their own, but it was understandable for patients whose conditions make it difficult to go to the state's current dispensaries, Townsend said. The homegrown provision nearly killed the bill in the state legislature several times; the pushback against the homegrown provision stemmed from law enforcement officials who were concerned about the emergence of another black market, Cassidy said.

"There's just this perception that five plants is going to be enough for someone to become a major dealer," Cassidy said. "There's a fair bit of 'reefer madness' out there still, and that's what we were up against."

Chief among the things that cannabis consumers need to remember is that they can consume the substance at home but not in public spaces. The bill allows local governments to decide where to allow social use spaces for cannabis consumption, which is akin to allowing cigar clubs or hookah bars in certain areas, Cassidy said. Law enforcement will be watching for consumers and entrepreneurs to do something wrong, which means consumers of color especially need to be aware of what the rules are, Townsend said.

It's also important to have a proper protocol for determining how impaired someone is after consuming cannabis, especially given that cannabis highs are not the same as alcohol impairment. "Until we come up with a really good impairment protocol, that part does make me a little bit nervous that we're going to wind up with, to be honest, mostly people of color being pulled over and getting tossed into prison cells because they possessed something they bought legally and then someone says, 'I think you're impaired,'" Vermillion said.

Another potential problem with the new law is that workplaces can enact a zero-tolerance drug policy. Cassidy said cannabis consumers can report concerns to the Illinois Department of Human Rights or the Illinois Department of Employment Security if they feel they're unfairly targeted for drug testing or they have been wrongfully fired from their job. Given that marijuana remains federally illegal, some of the discrimination issues will be resolved by the courts, Mitchell said.

On top of being behind the established cannabis cultivators and dispensaries, new entrants into the recreational cannabis market will have to learn how to operate a business to be successful, said Seke Ballard, managing director of Good Tree Capital. His firm is looking to finance cannabis entrepreneurs who have shown potential to be successful business owners. "The head start that existing licensees get is probably the most disappointing component of the bill," he said.

Though the bill makes considerable strides toward shepherding diverse entrepreneurs into the market, industry insiders say up-and-coming cannabis companies could use other resources to get their businesses on the right track. For example, entrepreneurs in Oakland, California, and Texas can access incubators for cannabis entrepreneurs. Cannabis entrepreneurs will likely need help navigating the licensing application process as well as education on back-end business functions like accounting, managing inventory, and assessing metrics, Ballard said.

Commercial real estate doesn't come cheap in Illinois, and the existing coworking spaces aren't always the best fit, Vermillion said. "It would've been nice to have somewhere where we could've been like on a three-month lease and have warehouse space with it," Vermillion said. "My biggest complaint would be lack of community, lack of space to get started."

She said she was glad that the state has legalized cannabis, but she stressed the importance of making the market accessible to as many diverse entrepreneurs as possible to keep up with the state's demand for products and make cannabis accessible to everyone. Many of her company's clients are mature women, usually in their 50s or 60s, who are turning to CBD for help with sleep, pain, and anxiety. Those women might not feel comfortable with the environment of a typical dispensary, and "budtenders" might not even think to ask older customers whether they're taking additional medications, which taking cannabis products could inadvertently impact.

"We must have companies run by the same types of people that it is being sold to in order to have an equitable and fair way we handle the industry," she said. She paused for a second, searching her memory for any cannabis dispensary owners of color she knew. She couldn't think of any.

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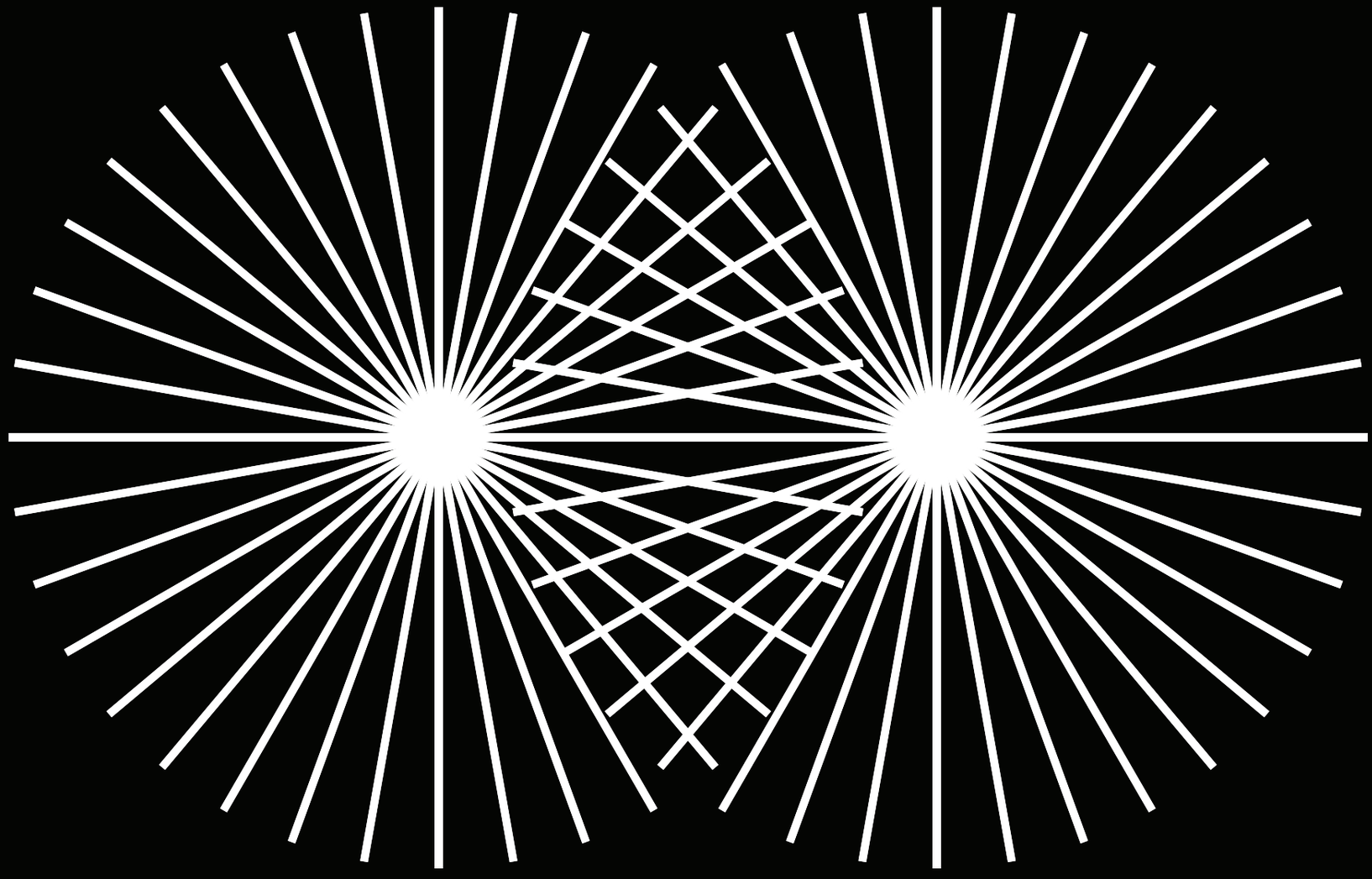

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Clockwise from left: Sherpa Special Vojan featuring goat curry; chhoila; mango ice cream
ALEXUS MCLANE

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Himalayan Sherpa Kitchen goes deeper into Nepal

The Lincoln Square spot draws on the country's regional and ethnic specialties.

By Mike Sula

For whatever reason, Nepalese food has become a thing this year. To be sure, Chicago has been home to nominally Nepalese restaurants for years. Nepal House, Cumin, Himshikar, Chicago Curry House, and Curry Hut are well established, but their menus often rely heavily on the not insignificant Indian influence on Nepalese cuisine and largely ignore the regional and ethnic differences within Nepal.

This is true even among the brand-new crop of legitimately exciting Nepalese restaurants, such as Vajra, a fine-dining newcomer that offers interesting takes on a few Nepalese standards (duck chhoila in particular), but still spans the subcontinent with diffusely inspired dishes like Goan fish curry, butter chicken, and tandoori venison. Places like Chiya Chai and the Momo World focus on the country's famous dumplings but don't go much deeper than that.

Enter Bhim Rai, an eight-year veteran of Highwood's Curry Hut, who along with three partners opened Himalayan Sherpa Kitchen in Lincoln Square with a menu that goes deeper into Nepalese regional and multiethnic foods than anywhere else in town.

Rai grew up cooking next to his mother in the Khoathaong District of northeastern Nepal, and at an early age was exposed to the cooking of friends in the Sherpa community, the group most closely associated with momo, but also a handful of less common Tibetan dishes that have found their way onto his menu too. As Rai began cooking professionally he was exposed to the food of other ethnic groups ranging from the midland-dwelling Thakali minority—famous for a multidish set similar to an Indian thali—to the urban Newari, who inhabit the capital and the Kathmandu Valley at large.

It wasn't until Rai left Nepal that he even learned to cook common Indian dishes, and though a section of his menu is devoted to familiar menu mainstays like vindaloo and chicken tikka masala, it's dominated by truly Nepalese dishes.

Start with *sephaley* (commonly spelled *shabaley*), a kind of Tibetan empanada stuffed with minced chicken and peas, lacquered with ghee, and served with a thick, mustardy dipping sauce.

Mustard—greens and oil—plays a prominent role across the menu, adding pungency and appealing bitterness. Fresh sauteed mustard greens steal the show from another Tibetan dumpling known as *ting-mo*, spongy, bland twists of warm dough enlivened by the chiled greens and the roasted tomato and garlic relish, called *golbheda ko achaar*, they're meant to be dipped in. Mustard oil announces itself in the mainstay *chhoila*, combining with the tingle of Sichuan peppercorn (in Nepal they use a close cousin) that distinguishes this dish of chopped boneless chicken sprinkled with crunchy beaten rice (*baji*) from the others that have begun appearing around town. The sea-

ALEXUS MCLANE

soning leaches into a bed of iceberg lettuce, taking that normally useless garnish to a new level. Rai applies the same profile to an appetizer version of this Newari festival staple: "base camp potatoes," crinkle-cut french fries, offered to bring vegetarians to the party.

Of course there are momo, here vegetable- or chicken-stuffed momo in three varieties—steamed, stained with chile sauce and fried, or bathing in the curried tomato soup known as *jhol*. These are in fact a good place on which to set up a base camp before moving on to Rai's more uncommon dishes, such as *thenthuk*, a large bowl of chicken soup thick with fat, hand-shaved noodles. There's an uncommon pumpkin curry, built on thin slices of gourd, rich with ghee; and *kwati*, a seven-legume stew that Rai steeps and cooks for nearly 24 hours in order to sprout the beans (for maximum digestibility).

Meaty bone-in–curries of goat, beef, or lamb laced with fenugreek and cinnamon balance out such wholesomeness, along with a surprising number (for a landlocked nation) of seafood dishes, most notably a salmon curry almost electric in its bright, acidic profile. Rai concedes this is a dish of his own invention, inspired by the freshwater river fish he catches on visits back home.

All or most of these can be eaten together in a set, noted on the menu as the Thakali Vojan or the Sherpa Special Vojan, aka *khana*, a kind of riff on the common thali that the famously business-oriented ethnic group adopted as their own, this one with a side of *ghundruk ko achaar*, a dense, crunchy, but somewhat less mild version of the fermented mustard leaf grown and sun-dried by Nepalese refugees from Bhutan less than a half mile west on Lawrence at the Global Garden Refugee Training Program.

Rai and his partners offer a lot more specifically Nepalese dishes, enough to keep novices in exploratory mode for some time. Dishes like grilled Sichuan-kissed grilled goat sekuwa, bitter melon in tomato sauce, and the particularly Nepali love letter to chow mein all show that Rai and his partners did their research. "We visited a lot of places in Chicago, and we haven't seen those," he says.

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The gospel of fried chicken

After church comes Luella's.

By Meggie Gates

Luella's Southern Kitchen
4609 N. Lincoln, 773-961-8196,
luellassouthernkitchen.com

Luella's Gospel Bird
2009 N. Damen, 773-904-7704,
luellassouthernkitchen.com

Shrimp and grits LESLIE FREMPONG

The Pruitt family (top) and the Moore family enjoy after-church brunch at Luella's Southern Kitchen. LESLIE FREMPONG

My reward for sitting through church was always food. Growing up, I'd stumble through Hail Marys, impatiently checking my dad's watch to see how close we were to breakfast. I'd strategize how to beat the closing-hymn crowd to make sure we got the license-plate booth at Riley's, the local diner in my hometown, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The booth sat under the wood wall showing all the places food could take you. Family is a feeling you can't stray far from, but one you can revisit in homemade southern food cooked fresh daily at Luella's Southern Kitchen in Lincoln Square.

"I want people to have that family experience when they come to Luella's," says owner-chef Darnell Reed. "Like a piece of home that takes them back to when they were a child."

Reed named the restaurant after his great-grandmother Luella Funches and included many of her family recipes on the menu. While the shrimp and grits and fried chicken have taken on a life of their own, Luella's-the-restaurant's famous corn-bread recipe is a Luella-the-great-grandmother original. Luella moved to Chicago from Morgan City, Mississippi, in 1943, and growing up, Reed spent hours after school hanging around her kitchen. The taste of her unique, homemade food inspired the decision to open his own restaurant. Reed later hired his brother, Tyris Bell, as general manager to keep it all in the family.

"We opened Luella's [in February 2015] a week before my daughter was born," says Reed. "I had a second daughter born in July [2018] and realized I needed more income, so we opened a second location."

Luella's Gospel Bird was inspired by culinary historian Adrian Miller's book *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*.

"Adrian Miller wrote that African Americans in the past called fried chicken 'gospel bird,'" says Reed. "It was usually prepared for Sundays or church days, and when I read that I thought that'd be a great concept."

Luella's Gospel Bird opened in November 2018 in a cozy storefront in Bucktown. Reed named its signature dish the Gospel: it's a serving of buttermilk fried chicken with special "gospel" sauce that features African benne (sesame) seeds. As with Luella's Southern

Brown sugar French toast LESLIE FREMPONG

Kitchen, Reed chose to open it in an area devoid of southern soul food.

"We looked at different neighborhoods and my real estate agent told me there's nothing like what you want to do in Lincoln Square," Reed remembers. "We opened Luella's Southern Kitchen there because it was unique. Once I ate at surrounding restaurants, I knew I could offer something Ravenswood didn't have.

"More southern soul-food joints started popping up in Chicago," he continues, "but we were one of the first. The fact that everything is homemade sets us apart from others."

The restaurant gained popularity after it was featured on the Cooking Channel show *Cheap Eats* in 2016. People from Alabama, Georgia, and, surprisingly, California came out to try Luella's cuisine. Chicagoans traveled from the south side regularly for the homemade food they saw on TV. Weekends are especially busy for both locations.

"We see a lot of churchgoers on Sunday," says Reed. "Church definitely plays a factor in to Sunday being our busiest time. Sometimes we get a before-church crowd, but if we open later, we get an after-church crowd."

Brunch at both Luella's restaurants evokes the feeling of family by re-creating Reed's great-grandmother's kitchen, serving her southern recipes in a cheerful wood-paneled storefront filled with Motown music and Ernie Barnes artwork. People may come for the food but they stay for the connections.

"Because I work in the kitchen daily, I've established relationships over four years with people who come in often. I've gone to some of their shows and bought clothes from one for my girlfriend," says Reed.

There are two families in Luella's Southern Kitchen after church lets out. Luella's is the epicenter of churches in Lincoln Square, and I can feel the exhilaration of people abandoning their cars on the street to get a seat near the window. A father laughs at his ambitious daughter pouring syrup over her chicken and waffles the same way my dad did when I'd ask the waitress for more. She looks out the window as her dad wipes food off the counter and watches leaves fall.

"We had someone start coming to us right when we opened, and now her daughter is three and a half," Reed says. "I hope we create memories they can look back on when they're older."

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Heartbreak sandwich

Life is full of disappointments, but the shawafel wrap at Middle East Bakery & Grocery is never one of them.

By Rachel Hawley

Middle East Bakery & Grocery
1512 W. Foster, 773-561-1853, middleeastbakeryandgrocery.com

"This is the best sandwich I've ever had." JAMIE RAMSAY / HAND MODEL: EMILY KOCEVAR

The first thing you need to know about the shawafel wrap at Middle East Bakery & Grocery is that everything in it is fresh. Its ingredients are delivered three times weekly; the constituent parts are assembled and cooked each morning. Hisham Khalifeh, who opened Middle East Bakery & Grocery in 1981, says it's the freshness and quality of ingredients that sets the food at his grocery store and cafe apart from other Mediterranean fare in Chicago. In addition to sandwiches, he sells chocolate baklava, macaroons, and an entire refrigerator rack's worth of sheep's milk cheeses.

"We use high-quality ingredients, fresh chickpeas, fresh onions—and our customers know it," says Khalifeh.

The cafe, an expansion on the Andersonville grocery, has been around for five years. The shawarma, both chicken or beef, does particularly well, according to Khalifeh, as do the kebabs. But for me, there is only the shawafel wrap.

I came across the sandwich four years ago during my first trip to Middle East Bakery with a friend. After I took that first bite, I sat in silence for so long that my friend looked at me with concern and asked if I was OK.

"This," I mumbled through a full mouth, not so much to him as to the universe at large, "is the best sandwich I've ever had."

It's difficult to overstate the sheer number of flavors and textures the sandwich manages to contain. The falafel, soft and fluffy with a crisp breaded crust, is loaded with garlic, while the chicken shawarma is tender and soaked in a savory marinade. The lettuce and pickle add a much-needed crunch, while the hummus and creamy tahini pull everything together and keep the wrap refreshing. Where most sandwiches are composed with rigid order, the shawafel wrap features a near-chaotic convergence of disparate tastes, the Stravinsky to other sandwiches' Bach.

We've developed a ritual, the sandwich and I. It has come to occupy the distinct role of food I turn to when faced with profound sadness. I have other emotionally driven food-based rituals: a strawberry milkshake from Potbelly to celebrate accomplishments, a chocolate doughnut from 7-Eleven after completing a dreaded and arduous task. I love sugar. But sweetness, much as I may crave it, ultimately lacks the range to comfort me through true despondency—some feelings require a savory flavor palette.

The night my boyfriend told me he was in love with someone else, I took the train 11 stops to Middle East Bakery. I tried not to cry in public, but tears dripped onto the pita despite my best efforts. In that moment, the cafe table where I sat felt like its own little island and everything on the other side of the storefront window—the cars, people walking their dogs, the train that I would eventually have to ride back home—felt indescribably distant.

I'd return a year or so later, on an early December afternoon that was snowy but still bright. I was about to leave school without knowing when or if I'd return; college, I'd realized too late, was never meant for me, and trying so hard for so long at something I just couldn't seem to succeed at had drained me until I was unable to try anymore. My fear and regret were sprawling, infecting everything they touched, but in the cafe, biting into the shawafel wrap, I still found temporary shelter and comfort.

I realize that I'm not going to stop getting my heart broken anytime soon. It comes with the territory of harboring expectations—of yourself, of those you love, of the future—which is, of course, impossible to avoid. Every major disappointment breeds its own miniature cycle of grief—for the life you might've thought you would have if things had gone according to plan, or for the person you would have liked to be, but aren't. That my generation is poised to inherit a world filled with crisis, horror, and uncertainty is an undue added layer of grief, one that neither I nor anyone I know seems equipped to handle.

Whenever I walk into Middle East Bakery, inevitably distraught, I do so nervously, worried that I have mentally hyperbolized the shawafel wrap, and it won't be as good as I remembered. Somehow, though, it always manages to live up to my expectations, and always brings some unique gustatory pleasure that I hadn't noticed before. The shawafel wrap never disappoints, and that's what makes it the perfect comfort food, one that can withstand the whirlwind of heartbreak. And it's always fresh.

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Night shift

What *really* goes on at the Hollywood Grill at 3 AM?

By Georgia Hampton

Hollywood Grill
1601 W. North, 773-395-1818, hollywood-grill.com

At 8 PM on a Friday night, the marquee lights are winking at the Hollywood Grill on the corner of North and Ashland. It's still dinnertime, but the restaurant feels comparatively quiet. A handful of patrons are scattered throughout the space, eating their strawberry shortcake French toast or their Drugstore Cowboy Burger deluxe, which comes with fries and a choice of soup. A man with a hand tattoo and a baby ushers two other children into a booth in the back. At the front of the restaurant, a woman loudly asks her friend at the counter if he's noticed her new hairdo. She fluffs her coiffure flirtatiously.

But most of the booths are empty; framed collages of smirking mobsters (the casts of *The Sopranos*, *The Godfather*, *Goodfellas*) glower down at empty chairs. A three-tiered display of untouched cakes and pies rotates silently while Cyndi Lauper hiccups through "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" at low volume.

The whole place seems to be holding its breath. Much later, in the wee hours of the morning, throng after throng of drunk twentysomethings will descend upon the 24-hour Wicker Park mainstay. They'll come from Beauty Bar, from Wicker Park Fest, from other bars that closed at two. Large groups will push tables together in the main dining room, while

Hollywood Grill night shift manager Perry MICHAEL SALISBURY

smaller groups will be relegated to the booths flanking the windows facing Ashland. The clientele is as bizarre a hodgepodge as the items on the menu—there always seems to be a gaggle of drunk teenagers, a couple on the verge of breaking up, and some guy in Adidas slides picking up a turkey club to go at 3 AM.

"The weekend never stops," says Perry, the shift manager. (He declined to give his last name.) Perry has been working the night shift here for 20 years but it hardly shows; bright eyes glow under his black baseball cap, and a grin peeks out from under his salt-and-pepper mustache. He looks like the type of man who dresses up for everything: even at midnight on a Sunday, he's wearing a crisp white dress shirt and clean, black dress pants. Perry's coy about his age. "You can say I'm a middle older person," he offers.

Perry talks while he works, explaining his love for the night shift while bringing a tray of water to a group of teenage boys who just sat down in one of the booths; "[I like] being around different people, it's something to look forward to while you're working." He interrupts his train of thought as a bearded man comes in. "You're the pickup? Chocolate chip pancakes?" he asks, handing over a takeout bag.

While Hollywood Grill remains the go-to spot—and really one of the only spots in the area—for 24-hour diner food, Perry is quick to mention that it's not like it once was. He describes how between 1995 and 2010, on busy nights, there used to be a line out the door and down the street. "People [would] come from all over," he explains, "coming like [it was] an airport."

But the neighborhood was different back then. "You remember when there used to be a gas station across the street?" he asks, gesturing to what is now a construction site for a ➔

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Servers grab orders from the kitchen; the remains of a late-night meal
MICHAEL SALISBURY

continued from 19

hotel. "The hookers used to trick over there." He describes when the buildings on Ashland were all vacant, the neighborhood was full of clubs, and the corner of Ashland and North was full of lonely businessmen with a free night and their company credit cards.

Perry describes Wicker Park back then as the place to be if you were "in search of love and good times," he says. "A wild era, let's put it that way. Even the waitresses were wild, like this one here." He jokingly points to a blond woman behind the counter. She shakes her head, grinning despite herself.

Now, the vibe is more relaxed: "more calm, more peaceful," Perry says. The clientele has changed—fewer club kids, more people in their 30s, parents with kids—though the restaurant does get its occasional wild night.

Perry certainly shows no sign of slowing down. His shift at Hollywood Grill runs from 10 PM to 7 AM, but it doesn't seem to bother him. He says he's been working the night shift at a variety of restaurants for 52 years. "I love the nightlife, plain and simple," he says.

A bald man in a button-up shirt comes up to the counter to pay his tab. "You guys are really 24/7?" he asks Perry, surprised. He's visiting from abroad and mentions how he's struggled to find late-night restaurants in the United States. There are more than 50 24-hour restaurants in Chicago, but the man tells Perry it's not as common to find late-night food as it is in other countries. "[Some places] close at ten, it's crazy!"

"Not this place!" Perry declares proudly, punching in the man's total into the register. Laughing, he adds, "not yet!"

Yoga + Beer

A practice that feeds the mind, body, and soul

By Justin C. Staley

Yoga in Sanskrit means "unity": of mind and body, the corporeal and the spiritual. And now, beer and poses. Several Chicago-area breweries, including Twisted Hippo, Great Central, Lake Effect, Metropolitan, and Temperance in Evanston, are now offering beer yoga. With these classes, though, come contradictions related to the clarity of sobriety and the cloudiness of alcohol, of fitness and pleasure. Beer yoga seems perfectly at home in America, land of excess and paradox, where we swat away one vice with a puritanical hand and reach for a different vice with the other.

Instead of having participants sip and integrate their beers into the poses, the breweries provide a free pour after the practice. Kristin Gulliford, owner of Namaste for Beer, which Great Central employs for their beer yoga classes, says that "to pay respect to both practices, consuming separately allows the patron to focus on the yoga, and then fully appreciate the beer."

Why people have latched on to the trend likely stems from a need to cultivate equanimity in their lives, and to find communities in which they're encouraged to do so.

"A lot of people enjoy the reward system," says Chelsea Matsumonji, retail operations manager at Begyle Brewing, which has offered beer yoga in the past. "'I was able to get up early, do a yoga class, and now I deserve this beer.'"

Begyle instructor Jessica Noble concurs. "If a beer is consumed after in celebration, then I think that's as beautiful as the yoga practice."

There's a symbiotic economic relationship here: breweries get people to drink their beer, and yoga companies get people to take their yoga. And let's be honest, because this is capitalism: both the brewery and the yoga company want to make money.

Yet there's also a social cross-pollination taking place. More health-minded people visit the brewery, and those with limited yoga experience attend practices. When writing this article, I invited a friend who hadn't done yoga since college to take a class with me, and he agreed. Would he have been willing to do it without the promise of a beer? Probably not. Would I have asked? Nope. Each of the breweries says something similar: beer yoga is about forming and strengthening community.

While there's a perception of quasi-religious dogma around craft beer snobs and yogis, the beer yoga trend typifies our yearning to find like-minded people, especially when being a text message or a click away from anything or anyone can ironically make us feel more isolated.

According to Josh Gilbert, owner and founder of Temperance Brewery, "We may carry inaccurate ideas about yoga and craft beer the same way we may have unhelpful stereotypes of what a craft beer drinker looks like, versus what a yogi looks like. With Temperance Trikonasana, we're breaking down those stereotypes and correcting the inaccuracies." Temperance's monthly sessions are fund-raisers for local nonprofit organizations, and the entire $20 fee goes to a different nonprofit. "We see the brewery—and especially the Tap Room—as a vehicle for building community," Gilbert says. "It's a much more enriching experience than if we were just offering yoga. And of course, the beer is a nice bonus at the end." Since 2015, Temperance has raised almost $14,000 for nonprofits. So much for my earlier point about capitalism.

Jenny Arrington, instructor at Temperance, tailors her class to the monthly fund-raiser, and her class is about more than just the asanas or the beer; it also provides strategies for self-care and tools for healing. "At Temperance Trikonasana, participants experience a class that includes philosophy, mantra, pranayama, and meditations. I also make sure that everyone knows how these teachings can help them in their everyday life."

Practitioners in savasana at Temperance Trikonasana COURTESY OF TEMPERANCE BEER CO.

On the surface, the goals of yoga, especially clarity of mind, don't exactly align with alcohol, which everyone inevitably realizes impairs clarity.

"The whole subject of intoxicants is definitely something that's discussed—sometimes hotly debated—amongst the [yoga] community," Noble says. While she takes no issue with a postpractice beer, she has reservations about drinking during the practice.

Arrington agrees: "I am obviously moderate and love that we can cultivate the idea of temperance at a brewery with the same name, but changing the practice of yoga itself is an appropriation I won't support."

That line—between pleasure and self-medication, between the physical and the mental, between the corporeal and the spiritual—is everything. Yet we sometimes struggle to navigate it. As the folks from Twisted Hippo tell me, "Exercise is primarily for the body, yoga brings contentment and focus to the mind, and a well-crafted, delicious beer can feed the soul."

Perhaps William Blake was wrong about where the road of excess leads. The road of moderation seems the better choice for most people. "The path to self-improvement is not creating strict rules for ourselves (that we're likely to break) or engaging in extreme behaviors," Gilbert tells me, "but rather approaching everything with a sense of curiosity (Beer and yoga? Let's try it!) and moderation."

The quiet of the practice, of breathing, of challenging ourselves, and letting go of what we carry, is indeed beautiful. To then be in a brewery and share a space, in quietude, when an early light slants through the windows and across the floors, beside tanks of beer and bags of barley and hops, is to be part of something beautiful too. Employees set up chairs and get glasses ready behind the bar. People's conversations unfold as if you were a part of them. There is, forgive me, a mindfulness to it.

If yoga teaches us about how the body feels and observes, how we breathe and perceive, of the attachments we feel and need to let go of, perhaps beer yoga illuminates the idea that being in good physical and mental shape doesn't have to mean starving out things that bring us pleasure.

Bliss CBD Shop offers a new vision for self-care

This girly stoner heaven sells CBD products, smoking accessories, and sex toys.

By Andrea Michelson

Bliss CBD Shop
4809 N. Pulaski, 773-997-9238,blisscdbshop.com

Venus & Flora, Bliss's house brand of CBD oil, contains essential oils from citrus fruits and mangoes. COURTESY BLISS CBD SHOP

At Bliss CBD Shop, handblown glass pipes can resemble anything from a bowl of ramen to the eggplant emoji. COURTESY BLISS CBD SHOP

Picture your happy place. Perhaps your oasis from stress involves a glass of wine, a bubble bath, and a good book. Maybe a joint or a CBD bath bomb is more your speed. Christine Yu, owner of Bliss CBD Shop, thinks that many women are choosing the latter option to unwind.

"Since I've been in this business, I've noticed that a lot of women who are 35-plus are using cannabis to help relax at the end of the evening," Yu said. "But they're too scared to go to the shop and buy a cute smoking accessory, so instead they're just dipping into a gas station and buying whatever cheap pipes they have there."

This kind of surreptitious purchase exasperates Yu. She believes that there should be a space where women can take their time and ask questions about cannabis and smoking accessories, but she's found that most smoke shops give off bros-only vibes. Out of the need for a haven for female stoners, Bliss CBD Shop was born.

Bliss CBD Shop opened its doors in Albany Park this February. The store, which advertises "CBD, pretty pipes, and sexy toys" on its front window, lives up to its female-friendly ideal with Instagram-worthy aesthetics and picturesque products. At Bliss, flowers bloom from hand-blown water pipes, you can smoke from a tiny glass cactus or pomegranate, and it's hard to tell the difference between a vape and a vibrator.

Yu knows that the wide array of products at Bliss can be daunting to some customers, but she's there to answer any and all questions. "It could be something as simple as how to use a water pipe," she says. "For a lot of people that might sound basic, but it really isn't. If you were lucky enough to have someone show you how to use one in college, then you're set. But there's a lot of people, especially the older generations, that are not used to using a simple pipe."

Even I, a college student and self-identified weed nerd, was unfamiliar with some of Bliss's products. The glass selection transcends the typical pipes offered at my neighborhood smoke shop, blurring the line between art and function. Yu mentioned that she's thought about hosting a gallery night with local glassblowers—and if she could showcase some female artisans, that would be even better.

While the glass and gadgets are more popular with Bliss's millennial clientele, the ➔

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Bliss CBD Shop offers CBD cartridges as well as tinctures, topicals, and edibles.
COURTESY BLISS CBD SHOP

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CBD products draw in an older demographic. CBD, or cannabidiol, is a nonpsychoactive chemical compound found in cannabis. Although it is not FDA approved, CBD is popularly used to relieve anxiety, inflammation, and other ailments.

Bliss offers CBD tinctures, topicals, flower, and edibles—and that's just the basics. To complement the selection of sex toys, there's also some CBD-infused lubricant that Yu says can be helpful for women who have trouble naturally lubricating postmenopause, or for those who experience pain during sex due to scar tissue.

You'll also find custom-made products at the shop, including Venus & Flora, Bliss's proprietary CBD oil. Yu worked with her friend Jorge Apacicio, a formulation specialist at Hemp for Fitness in Glenview, to develop what is essentially a signature scent for the Bliss brand.

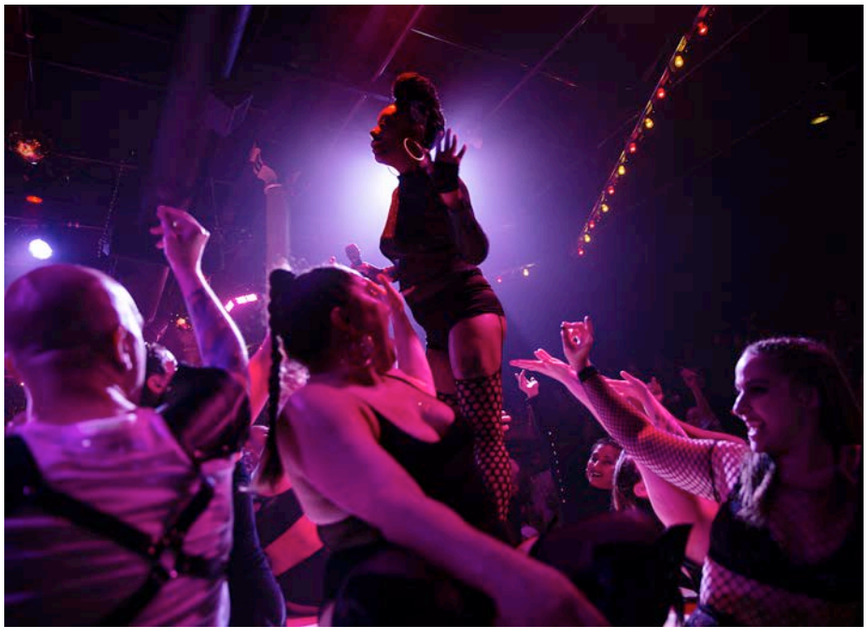
Apacicio says he chose a couple of terpenes, which are essential oils found in cannabis and other plants, to create an aromatic profile for Venus & Flora. The terpenes give the oil a one-of-a-kind fragrance as well as an extra "calming and relaxing effect," Apacicio said—think of it like a CBD-aromatherapy love child.

Venus & Flora may sound like bottled bliss, but Yu says people need to treat CBD as a lifestyle change in order to see the full effects. "You can't take CBD but continue eating the way that you do or drinking or not being active and expect it to do something miraculous," she said. "You need to make those changes in your life as well for the CBD to be at its optimal level."

Such a shift requires a financial commitment—Bliss's products aren't cheap. The most popular CBD tincture in the store costs $80 for a bottle that will serve about a month of daily use, and a handmade pipe can go for as much as $100. However, Yu maintains that someone could spend that money on a spa treatment, a fancy dinner, or a night of drinking. So, she asks, why not invest in a different kind of self-care?

Between the girly comfort of the store and the luxury appeal of a boutique glass piece or CBD oil, perhaps what Yu is really selling is the Bliss lifestyle. She says she hopes that when recreational cannabis becomes legal in Illinois next year, women will be excited to invest in quality smoking accessories and explore cannabis freely. In the meantime, she has created a space where relaxation is a reality and women can treat themselves, whether they're seeking sexual pleasure or an herbal remedy.

@amichelson18



The Fly Honey Show ERIC STROM/GLITTER GUTS

FEATURE

A decade of keeping it fly

The Fly Honey Show celebrates inclusivity with a burlesque twist.

By Kerry Reid

RR ***The Fly Honey Show***
Through 9/7: Thu-Sat 10 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, thedentheatre.com, $25 standing room, $40 general admission seating, $100 VIP.

It was supposed to be a one-off event in an artists' loft space. But the buzz kept growing. Now in its tenth year, *The Fly Honey Show* has become so hot that by the time you're reading this, most of the tickets will have been snapped up—even the priciest $100 VIP ducat, which comes with a reserved table and a swag bag. (A portion of the proceeds this year goes to UltraViolet, a nonprofit dedicated to fighting sexism and creating inclusivity in politics, media, and pop culture.)

RR *Women of 4G*
Through 9/14: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Factory Theater, 1623 W. Howard, 773-904-0391, babeswithblades.org, $28, $15 students and seniors, $10 industry.

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Still, Fly Honey's creator, choreographer Erin Kilmurray, says that she thinks the show, which started out at the multidisciplinary arts incubator the Inconvenience, where she is a company member, is still "pretty niche. There's lots of folks who are familiar with the project but haven't been able to see it yet." On opening night this year, I was one of the newbies, and in talking to other audience members, it's clear I wasn't the only virgin in the house.

The show involves so many artists that the friends-and-family demographic alone could fill the Den's Heath mainstage space, which has been the show's home for the past three years. There's a rotating cast of more than 300 performers, from the core group of "Honeys" (women or femme-identified performers and dancers) to the "Hive" (men or mostly male-identified performers who serve as backup dancers and running crew) to featured artists and one-night-only special guests. The emphasis is on body positivity and inclusivity. Keeping the proceedings—a high-octane cabaret show of burlesque-inspired dance, comedy, music, and spoken word—on track is a trifecta of hosts: Mary Williamson (who has been with the show since the beginning and cowrote it this year with Shannon Matesky), actor-singer Sydney Charles (moonlighting with the Fly Honeys while in rehearsal for *The Color Purple,* opening next month at Drury Lane Theatre), and longtime actor-physical theater star Molly Brennan.

Opening night, the featured performers and guests included nonbinary comedian Shannon Noll, who revealed the results of their recent top surgery and delivered a sharp-elbowed stand-up set about the problems suburban housewives named "Kathy" have with using they/them pronouns, and the all-woman mariachi band Mariachi Sirenas, whose lead singer noted that "sirenas" means "mermaid—and you know what they do to men." Michelle Zacarias, who performs under the name Cherry Darling, recalled a series of "not-shit" relationships in a spoken-word piece. And the entire three-hour sweaty extravaganza included one pelvic-thrusting, gyrating, defiant, and sexy ensemble dance number after another. Consent and respect are reinforced early on by the hosts, who make it clear that anyone touching the artists or fellow audience members without permission will be eighty-sixed.

For Kilmurray, it's the community that builds up around the show all year round that makes the biggest impact. "A couple of years ago, we started holding free public workshops. That's how we've met a lot of new ensemble members over the years. It's been pretty crucial." Participants don't need to have previous dance experience. Kilmurray notes, "The ensemble has always been, from the very beginning, a really wide range of movers, novice to professional." Recognizing that this kind of work can sometimes bring up unexpected issues around sexuality and body awareness, performer Nora Sharp also hosts a series of meet-ups for "people who are in the project and just want to talk about whatever they're going through and how they feel," says Kilmurray.

She adds, "This show offers a lot of options. If you don't feel like dancing in the ensemble, you can propose to be a featured artist." This year, the curation team also asked past performers to nominate other artists who might be interested in participating. Performers also have what Kilmurray calls "an outrageous amount of agency. We have pretty open communication for feedback throughout the whole process. The performers costume themselves, so they can wear whatever they want."

One exception is that all the performers who are topless—male, female, and nonbinary—must wear pasties, thanks to antiquated city laws requiring dancers in clubs where booze is sold to cover their nipples. The law really only applies to women, but in the Fly Honey spirit of egalitarianism, the men tape over their nipples too. Kilmurray notes, "I have so many questions about what is or isn't provocative art. You can be topless in the MCA or in an art gallery space that's a performance art situation."

Kilmurray and Fly Honey producing director Missi Davis have talked about taking the show to other cities or other venues during the year. (The Fly Honeys already get hired for some gigs outside of their regular August run.) The challenge is how to get bigger without losing sight of the collaborative nature of the show and turning it into just another burlesque-inspired showcase. "I've always been attracted to spectacle, to audience engagement, and shaping environments to offer a lens into the work," says Kilmurray. "What's so fascinating about this project is that it's been a decade-long performance practice, you know? It is a social research practice."

@kerryreid

Women of 4G
JOE MAZZA

REVIEW

Space: the final feminist frontier

Babes With Blades break out the fisticuffs in the sci-fi thriller *Women of 4G*.

By Kerry Reid

At one point in the 1999 sci-fi comedy *Galaxy Quest*, Sigourney Weaver's exasperated communications officer, whose only function on board (aside from providing eye candy) is to repeat whatever Tim Allen's captain has just said to the computer, blows up at her crewmates. "Look, I have one job on this lousy ship. It's stupid, but I'm going to do it, OK?"

The all-female crew in Amy Tofte's *Women of 4G*, now in a nifty local premiere from Babes With Blades under Lauren Katz's direction, face higher hurdles and tougher jobs. What's admirable is that Tofte's script and the Babes cast mostly manage to balance a lot of competing genres—space-opera parody, whodunit, race-against-time apocalyptic thriller, melodrama-with-a-feminist-twist—with only a few scattered bobbles in tone. The deliberately low-fi aesthetics of Jessica Baldinger's gray modular movable set pieces and the old-school tools (socket wrenches never go out of style, apparently) add to the sense that we're in a world that is both retro and on life support.

In the first moments, we learn that the ship's captain (the only male in the crew) has died under suspicious circumstances. Stark (Ashley Yates) takes command and wrestles not only with figuring out what happened to her predecessor, but also with whether the crew should complete its mission of launching a satellite that could reverse global climate change, or preserve their future careers by following protocol and returning to earth. The latter means the all-male "shadow ship" right behind them (hilariously named "Adonis 5") would get credit for the launch.

Wollman (Jazmín Corona), creator of the satellite, fights for her scientific baby, while the hotheaded navigator, Nataki (LaKecia Harris), is ready to take down anyone who questions her competency, especially the engineer, Baston (Catherine Dvorak). The medical team of Cava (Renee Lockett) and Toulle (Judi Schindler) provide sharp comic relief throughout, as well as reminding their colleagues of the dangers of ageism. (Baston, realizing that disobeying the chain of command and finishing the mission might end her career, laments "I'm not ready to retire," to which Schindler's Toulle acidly retorts "You think I am?") The youngest crew member, Pierce (Jillian Leff), embodies both naivete and cunning, to the exasperation of her shipmates, who realize she's the only one who might be able to save them.

The fights (created by Maureen Yasko) involve straight-up fisticuffs instead of blades. Not all of the blows land believably on the small stage, but the verbal thrusts and parries tear through the chain of command as the women confront their own mortality and what their mission (or its failure) might mean for future generations, especially women. Underneath all the nods to other familiar tropes contained in the story, the show maintains a poignant note of despair and sadness that women's gambits for personal glory must be measured against the expectation that they will always sacrifice themselves for the greater good.

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READER

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A scene from the 2017 Peacebook Festival, produced by Collaboraction. JOEL MAISONET

PREVIEW

Collaboraction gives peace a chance

The annual Peacebook Festival showcases short plays about peace and justice.

By Catey Sullivan

Eviction and art. As a grade-schooler in Bronzeville, Nambi E. Kelley learned that surviving the former meant embracing the latter. Now 45, Kelley is a widely acclaimed playwright, actor, and screenwriter. Still, evictions have a way of leaving a mark on people. Kelley used her memories as a launching point for the ten-minute, south-side-set *Ode to Mama Obama by Someone Who Was a Little Black Girl in the 'Hood*, debuting alongside 20 other short works of dance, drama, poetry, comedy, and spoken word in Collaboraction's 2019 Peacebook Festival, opening Thursday at Englewood's Kennedy-King College.

Kelley's playlet takes the (almost) mythic origin story of Michelle Obama and her south-side working-class roots and filters it through the prism of a Black woman whose perspective on Obama's humble beginnings isn't often heard out loud. As Kelley puts it: "My main character is also from the south side of Chicago. She's experiencing homelessness, and she's like, 'How come Michelle Obama gets out of here with this fine-ass chocolate president husband and I'm left in the bottom of the elevator shaft?'"

To be clear, Kelley is nowhere near the bottom of an elevator shaft, metaphorically or literally. "I can't really explain how that eviction helped me create, but I can say that there was—and is—no other outlet to express what I was feeling except through art," she says.

That succinctly sums up Peacebook's ambitions: to provide an outlet for anyone who wants to get involved with theater, whether that means snapping up (always free) tickets to a show or devising a scene or interviewing Chicagoans about issues of the day. The company has also committed to producing this year's season entirely on the south side, Kennedy-King serving as the home-court locale of future productions.

Collaboraction managing director Marcus Robinson and founder Anthony Moseley are undaunted by the challenges inherent in putting on three different evenings of seven-act productions (if you want to binge-watch all 21, check the opening-weekend schedule) with a budget that would barely cover the costumes at some of Chicago's bigger institutions. Robinson, an Englewood hypnotherapist and community organizer who recently relocated from Michigan, is unshakable in his belief in theater's ability to heal, uplift, and foment change.

"The blues came from oppression, and changed the musical landscape of the world. Gospel music changed the way we worship and pray. Both came from the south and west sides of Chicago, out from under the crushing weight of poverty and oppression, " Robinson says. "What I've learned is that art is healing for both the artists and the audience. We play the blues for each other so we can commune over our hardships. We can see each other. Really see each other."

Robinson will be holding what he terms "crucial conversations" after each Peacebook performance, discussions he promises will go deeper than your average talkback. "We want to get beyond talking about what happened onstage, and into what happened to you when you experienced it."

@CateySullivan

Fourth Annual Peacebook Festival
Thu 8/15-Sat 8/17, 7 PM, Kennedy-King College Theater, 740 W. 63rd; Fri 9/13, 6 PM (opening performance by Loretta "Firekeeper" Hawkins), and Sat 9/14, 1 PM, LaFollette Park, 1333 N. Laramie, ; Fri 9/20, 6 PM (opening performance by Prince Roc), and Sat 9/21, 1 PM, Douglas Park, 1401 S. Sacramento;Fri 9/27, 6 PM (opening performance by Jason Robinson), and Sat 9/28, 1 PM, Hamilton Park, 513 W. 72nd, 312-226-9633, collaboraction.org. Free meal and preshow activities at all Sat performances. FREE

PREVIEW

Beyond snakes and stones

Pop Magic's devised international performance piece on Medusa tours Chicago neighborhoods.

By Dan Jakes

Despite sporting the *most* recognizable hairdo in all of literature, general knowledge about the mythological figure Medusa tends to boil down to three perfunctory traits: "She's the monster with snakes for hair. She gets her head cut off. If you look at her, you turn to stone. That's about it," says Denise Yvette Serna, director and lead deviser of the upcoming Pop Magic performance piece named after the storied, steely-eyed Gorgon.

"As we've explored through our rehearsals and continued our research," says Serna, "we found it to be much more complex." Across five venues throughout the city, Pop Magic Productions—in partnership with Global Hive Laboratories and En Las Tablas Performing Arts—will stage an experimental multidisciplinary retelling of the classic myth with a new translation by dramaturg and scholar Emma Pauly, to be informed by contemporary cultural conversations and personal experiences of the show's ensemble.

Building off developments and lessons facilitated by weeklong workshops at Global Hive Laboratories-partnered companies in London, Paris, and Piacenza, Pop Magic's Chicago production will draw parallels between Medusa being punished and "monsterized" by Athena for the "crime" of being raped by Poseidon in Athena's temple and the victim-blaming in rape culure that the MeToo movement has called out. "This idea of a victim of assault being punished for what has happened to them—that was really potent for us," says Serna.

And by choosing an ancient myth with a rich and sometimes inconsistent drama-

MEDUSA
Through 8/25: times and locations vary, see popmagic.org/medusa. FREE

Medusa
MATTHEW GREGORY HOLLIS

turgical history, Pop Magic hopes to enable casts in each host city to lend their own linguistic and cultural interpretations.

For coproducer and En Las Tablas executive director Maritza Nazario, the opportunity to host and support a fellow arts organization with a shared emphasis on grassroots experimentation and accessibility was a no-brainer. "[These] two blocks between Pulaski and Keeler—we're being really daring, I guess." The 13-year-old Hermosa-based nonprofit community arts organization offers programs for all ages, though as Nazario notes, most of its engagement is with children; the creatives behind *Medusa*, on the other hand, hope to connect with adults and draw attention to services offered at En Las Tablas.

"We have our bodies, and we have our mouths, and we are colorful," says Nazario, "and we take advantage of that and try to make a lot of noise so people know that we are here. And when the opportunity comes to have people here to use the space, people that believe in the same things that we believe, that have a mission very similar to ours, we'll open our doors immediately."

For Serna, *Medusa* also represents an opportunity to proactively incorporate aspects of accessibility that can often go overlooked in more institutionalized arts organizations. "We've observed that access services for people who are disabled, and other access things such as free and discounted tickets, child care, things like that . . . they're all too not considered when a show is being created. They're something that's tacked on afterwards as sort of the one special day or two special days that they happen. We're interested in creating devised theater that has that in every performance."

@DanEJakes

THEATER

OPENING

The importance of being earnest

***All That He Was* is a heart-on-sleeve musical about the darkest days of the AIDS epidemic.**

A little more than two decades ago, composer Cindy O'Connor and lyricist-book writer Larry Todd Cousineau teamed up while still graduate students to write this chamber musical. It won a National Playwright's Award and had a successful Los Angeles run, but even in its updated form, premiering at Pride Films & Plays, it's unmistakably a student effort—which gives it both a naive charm and an unsatisfying superficiality. It's set at the 1992 funeral of the Man, who's just died from AIDS complications at age 26 and acts as unseen host as warring key figures from his life assemble. In the title opening number, each character's big issue is laid out: the Mother is guilty, the Father is ashamed, the Sister is self-righteous, the Brother is adrift. No one thinks the Lover should be there at alll.

It's all a bit schematic, and most of the show's 105 minutes feature heart-on-the-sleeve ballads and anthems that delineate rather than dramatize each character's tortured back story. Not only does this make every other number feel like the show's emotional climax, but it leaves everyone stuck in emotional cement—until they unaccountably reconcile their issues in a single closing number.

But the show's youthful vigor can pluck the heartstrings, especially in moments revisiting the darkest days of the epidemic. Director Cousineau's earnest if at times overwrought performers sing the stuffing out of a demanding score. Even the wish-fulfilling finale, perfectly devoid of cynicism, feels like something of a tonic. **—Justin Hayford** ***All That He Was*** *Through 9/9: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 5 PM; also Mon 8/19, 8 PM (industry performance), Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway, 773-857-0222, pridefilmsandplays.com, $30-$40, $25 students and seniors (not valid Sat).*

RR Black swan queen

***Black Ballerina* provides a stunning showcase for Kara Roseborough.**

The story of Black women in classical dance is obscure enough that any show spotlighting the pioneers is welcome as a history lesson alone. But in Fleetwood-Jourdain's *Black Ballerina* (cowritten by artistic director Tim Rhoze and Stephen Fedo), dancer Kara Roseborough's stellar performance in two different roles, along with her breathtaking technique, makes us feel that history in the solar plexus.

More than once, characters note with exasperation that Misty Copeland isn't the first Black woman in the art. Roseborough plays both contemporary Adrienne and her grandmother in the 1950s, Olivia. Despite the 50 years' difference, both women wrestle with whether it's better to keep fighting for acceptance in a frankly racist world (the fetishization of "purity" in the corps de ballet being a convenient fig leaf for that racism) or to walk away—or at least audition for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater instead.

The connective tissue between Olivia and Adrienne is Shariba Rivers's Marie (Olivia's daughter and Adrienne's mom), whose own career was cut short when her jazz musician-addict husband ran off the road, killing himself and his bassist, Reuben (Zach Finch), and injuring Marie. Reuben's ghost and young Marie (Bijou Carmichael) drop by to chew the fat with Marie from time to time, which feels more like an awkward expositional device than anything else, though Rivers imbues Marie with a potent mix of cynicism, regret, and pride in her daughter's talent.

Black Ballerina
COURTESY BASIL CLUNIE

But the dance interludes (choreographed by Roseborough and Béa Rashid) and the fights both Adrienne and Olivia have with white people in charge of their careers capture both the joy of ballet and the heartbreak of discrimination with beauty and truth. **—Kerry Reid** ***Black Ballerina*** *Through 8/25: Sat 7 PM, Sun 2 PM, Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, 847-866-5914, cityofevanston.org, $20.*

RR Battle scars

***Boogieban* traces the effects of war on soldiers of two different eras.**

Two soldiers of different generations come together in D.C. Fidler's *Boogieban*, a contemporary exploration of the enduring trauma of war. Presented by None Too Fragile Theatre, an Ohio-based company, the story follows Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Caplan (David Peacock), a Vietnam veteran and military psychologist who is assigned to treat Specialist Jason Wynsky (Travis Teffner), whose recurring nightmares have led to his release from his unit in Afghanistan. With each session, both men see themselves more clearly reflected in the other. As they connect, the depths of their pain become more profound and the consequences of their service feel more urgent.

Peacock and Teffner navigate their respective roles with the utmost empathy. Under director Sean Derry, they reveal the humanity in the characters and display their bond for each other with authenticity. This feels especially vital, as the script often moves too quickly through their sessions and the progression of their relationship. Peacock performs a number of monologues that address Caplan's relationship with his son, who was killed in Afghanistan. These moments are stunning, thanks to Peacock's ability to use silence and tempo to his advantage. In stark contrast, Teffner is tasked with performing the severe physical manifestations of PTSD from which Jason suffers. These moments could feel disingenuous in the wrong hands, but Teffner captures the stark reality of the situation. Watching the story unfold, it's powerful to imagine what it might mean for audience members who sees themselves in it. **—Katie Powers** ***Boogieban*** *Through 8/31: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Chicago Dramatists Theatre, 1105 W. Chicago, 330-962-5547, nonetoofragile.com, $35.*

RR The Gay 30s

***Diamond Lil & and the Pansy Craze* revisits a famous Chicago nightclub.**

Long before the Viagra Triangle took root in the Gold Coast, 909 Rush Street was a haven for artists and audiences who celebrate life outside the gender binary. Jason Paul Smith and Roy A. Freeman's jukebox journey through the history of the infamous Diamond Lil's invokes the 1930s by echoing both the tawdry glamour of *Cabaret* and the optimistic sheen of *42nd Street*. Shaped around more than 30 songs you have surely never heard, Diamond Lil (Michael Hampton, as shiny as the Chrysler Building in full flapper regalia) and his sparkly sextet—some in drag, some not—host a fabulous music-laden history lesson on Chicago's Pansy Craze of the 1930s.

Diamond Lil & and the Pansy Craze
JASON PAUL SMITH

You can't walk away from *Diamond Lil* without feeling at least a smidge more defiantly hopeful about the future than you did when you walked in. Such is the power of numbers like the lyrically whack, harmonically intricate, and bygawd bonkers "There Are Fairies in the Bottom of Our Garden," which is akin to watching *Ziegfeld Follies*, only with lyrics written at an ayahuasca retreat. The show's delights aren't restricted to the all-hands-on-deck ensemble shebangs. wherein everyone sashays about like imps on absinthe at the Folies Bergère (there is a terrific cancan number, btw). On the awesome, growling "BD Women Blues," Carolyn Nelson sounds like she's got a choir of ancestors holding her up. "The Cabaret Boys" is a sly ode to chorus cuties. Orlando Shelly shows off some formidable clarinet chops on "Downhearted Blues." There are off-kilter oddities as well, including a ditty about a child who likely pushed his sister down a well and another about a toxic case of poison ivy. After Chicago mayor Anton Cermak was assassinated in 1933, his successor, Edward J. Kelly, shut down Diamond Lil's. In resurrecting her, Freeman and Smith have done us all a favor. **—Catey Sullivan** ***Diamond Lil & the Pansy Craze*** *Through 9/7: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 7:30 PM, Berger Park Coach House Theater, 6205 N. Sheridan, 312-970-9840, threecatproductions.com, $25, $15 seniors.*

Political parties

A president-elect's son fights for his own voice in *Now or Later*.

It's not Christopher Shinn's fault that living in the Worst Time Line Ever has made the hot-button issues in his 2008 play *Now or Later* feel more like mild provocations. When presidential tweets contain more fodder for outrage every day, a story about the closeted college-age son of a presumptive Democratic president-elect attending a party dressed as the Prophet Muhammad to prove a point about free speech on campus is just sort of, well, quaint.

Shinn, who tackled homophobia on campus in 2013's *Teddy Ferrara* at the Goodman, mostly avoids easy dialectics in his story, and Bradley Hamilton's staging for Intrinsic Theatre also keeps the self-righteous posturing to a minimum. But there is a distinct lack of urgency on both the page and the stage. The story unfolds in real time on Election Night in the hotel room of John (Joe Sharkey) as his father's aides and his mother, Jessica (Debra Rodkin), try to persuade him to issue an apology for photos from the party that have just gone viral. His friend, Matt (Kyle Patrick), offers moral support and a philosophical sounding board.

There's no serious question about the party pictures derailing the campaign of John Sr. (Scott Olson). The fear is that it will give the media and the GOP-majority Congress an excuse to derail his agenda. (I know—adorable, right?) It's the family conflicts that work best here, as when Olson's politico essentially gets his son to admit that going to the party was more about needling annoying classmates (and pissing off his dad) than making a political pronouncement. But for the most part, though the play contains potent ideas about how being in politics renders everyone nervous about public perceptions (unless you're Donald Trump), the execution is too muted to pack an equivalent emotional punch. **—Kerry Reid** ***Now or Later*** *Through 8/31: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon 8/19, 7:30 PM, Edge Theater Off-Broadway, 1133 W. Catalpa, intrinsictheatrecompany.com, $25, $15 students and seniors, $10 industry.* RR

Blinded by the Light

NOW PLAYING

N The Amazing Johnathan Documentary

What is most evident and fascinating about this documentary following the "farewell tour" of its titular comic-magician is the inexperience of its director, Ben Berman. Previously, Berman had only directed television and comedic shorts, and the fact that this shows in his shaky handling of a new medium works both for and against him. A more savvy documentarian probably would have precluded or circumnavigated the manipulations of a subject like Johnathan, aka John Edward Szeles, the "amazing" provocateur who asked multiple documentary crews to follow him in the wake of his announcement, in 2014, that he had one year to live. Cut to 2017, and Berman is shocked to discover that he's far down the list of people making a movie about Szeles, though his film is at its least interesting when he's wallowing in self-pity about this. It's not until Berman dives deeper, questioning his motivations to pursue the subject matter and testing the ethical limits of narrative nonfiction, that his doc makes a persuasive case for existing. It is odd and arguably antithetical to the purposes of documentary filmmaking that the director reveals much more about himself than his subject. Nevertheless, Berman pulls off a neat trick with the cards he's dealt. In the end, even Szeles is surprised. **—Leah Pickett** *91 min. Streaming on Hulu*

N Blinded by the Light

How much does Bruce Springsteen have in common with a 16-year-old Pakistani boy growing up in a small English village in 1987? According to *Blinded by the Light*, a lot more than one would think. Based on the life of screenwriter Sarfraz Manzoor, this is the coming-of-age story of Javed (Viveik Kalra), a young writer who finds a sense of purpose after discovering the music of "the Boss." Director and cowriter Gurinder Chadha tries to cover a lot of ground, from the frustrations of high school to navigating tradition and family to the attempt to find one's voice while living in a town riddled with Islamophobia. However, most of the film's emotional weight is undermined by cheesy sing-alongs with the lyrics visualized in such a garish way that the supposed thematic significance bashes the audience in the head. The film senselessly pivots from a corny but harmless comedy musical to a tense family drama and without being either successfully. **—Cody Corrall** *PG-13, 114 min. Block 37, ArcLight, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Century Centre, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Ford City*

Dick

Two teenage girls (Kirsten Dunst and Michelle Williams) touring the White House in the mid-70s stumble upon some secrets of Richard Nixon (Dan Hedaya) without realizing what they are, and when things snowball wind up as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's "Deep Throat" informant. This is silly and shameless stuff (1999) that made me laugh quite a lot, in part because it provides the perfect antidote to the neo-Stalinist pomposity of Oliver Stone's *Nixon* and glib self-importance of Alan J. Pakula's *All the President's Men*. Andrew Fleming (*Threesome*, *The Craft*) , who directed from a script he wrote with Sheryl Longin, lacks the polish and pizzazz of Stone and Pakula, but arguably his notions about American politics are healthier and more earthbound than theirs; in his book, Nixon and Kissinger *and* Woodward and Bernstein are all deserving of ridicule. In some ways this is like *Forrest Gump* without the neocon trimmings, which for me makes it bracing and energizing, though younger viewers may not catch all the historical references. With Harry Shearer as G. Gordon Liddy, Saul Rubinek as Kissinger, and Teri Garr. **—Jonathan Rosenbaum** *PG-13, 94 min. Fri 8/16-Sat 8/17, midnight. Music Box*

RR The Gleaners and I

A superb documentary (2000) by Agnès Varda, the sole woman member of the French New Wave, who not only wrote and directed but also shot the film with a digital camera. The film begins by musing on ➦

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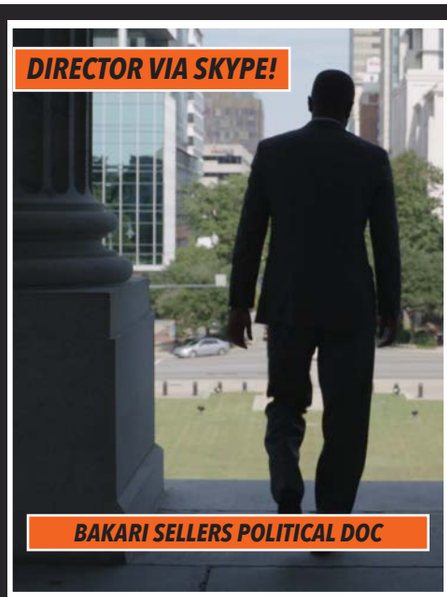
FILMMAKERS IN PERSON!
AUGUST 18

STRIVE
FILMMAKERS IN PERSON!
AUGUST 21 & 22

BLACK HISTORY–LOST AND FOUND (SHORTS)
FILMMAKERS IN PERSON!
AUGUST 22



AUGUST 16 & 20
WHILE I BREATHE, I HOPE

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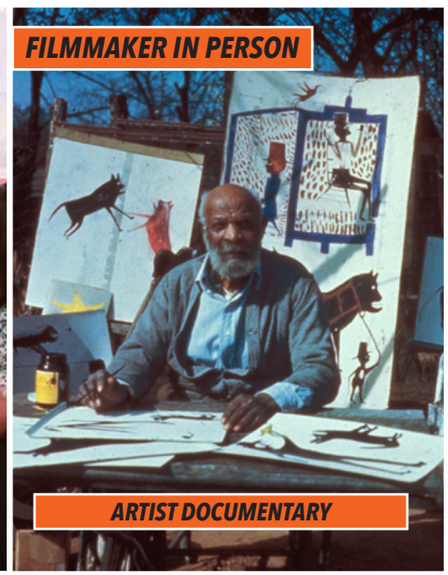

AUGUST 18 & 19
BILL TRAYLOR: CHASING GHOSTS

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➡ people who pick up what's left on the ground after mechanical harvesting and moves on to interviews with other types of gleaners: artists who use found objects, a Michelin two-star chef who forages for herbs, and folks who troll for discarded food in supermarket dumpsters, pick up edible detritus after market stalls have been struck, or furnish their homes with sidewalk discards. Varda seamlessly weaves in poetic interludes on famous images of gleaners by French artists, a magical sequence in which she stumbles upon a junk-shop work that combines two of her favorite harvest paintings, and her own feelings about aging, travel, and the cinema. Not to be missed. In French with subtitles. **—Meredith Brody** *82 min. Fri 8/16, 8 PM. PO Box Collective* FREE

N If the Dancer Dances

The problem with making a film about the making of art—be it a painting, an album, or in this case, a dance work—is that knowing how a piece was constructed often depreciates the work itself, demystifying its core and flattening a more personal meaning the viewer may have otherwise attached to it. Still, this documentary from journalist-turned-filmmaker Maia Wechsler is a gorgeous dissection of *RainForest*, a 1968 modern dance masterpiece from choreographer Merce Cunningham, and the process of its contemporary restaging. Stephen Petronio and dancers from his eponymous New York-based company toil under the sharp eyes of three dancers from the original ensemble to perfect every move. The final performance ties into a centennial celebration of Cunningham, who died at age 90 in 2009. His presence is spine-tingling throughout, whether in the wild, thrilling contortions of the current dancers; the original performers, luminous against an abstract set designed by Andy Warhol; or Cunningham himself, seen in piquant archival footage. The film may not compare to seeing *RainForest* in its purest form, live and sans context, but no matter: dance nerds and visual art obsessives will find much to appreciate. **—Leah Pickett** *83 min. Fri 8/16, 2:15 and 6 PM; Sat 8/17, 5:15 PM; Sun 8/18, 3:15 PM; Mon 8/19, 6 PM; Tue 8/20, 8:15 PM; Wed 8/21, 8 PM; and Thu 8/22, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR The Last Black Man in San Francisco

Lifelong San Francisco resident Jimmie Fails plays a fictionalized version of himself in Joe Talbot's ambitious debut feature, which takes a poetic view of gentrification, underemployment, and other issues facing the city's Black population. The episodic story centers on Fails's efforts to rehabilitate an old mansion that once belonged to his grandfather. When the home's most recent owners move out, Fails breaks in with his best friend (an aspiring playwright who works in a fish market), and the two begin squatting there, symbolically reclaiming a neighborhood that had once been predominantly Black but had long since priced out most of its Black residents. Talbot structures the film like a piece of music; this proceeds gracefully from one observation to the next, emphasizing the characters' way of life over narrative development. (The diverse soundtrack, which ranges from contemporary classical to Joni Mitchell, adds greatly to the film's affecting impact.) It sometimes feels as if Talbot is overplaying his hand—his use of slow-motion, for instance, feels needlessly arty—but one can't deny the seriousness of his concerns or his emotional investment in the material. With Jonathan Majors, Mike Epps, and Danny Glover. **—Ben Sachs** *R, 120 min. Fri 8/16, 2 and 7:45 PM; Sat 8/17, 3 and 7:45 PM; Sun 8/18, 5 PM; Mon 8/19, 8 PM; Tue 8/20, 6 PM; Wed 8/21, 6 PM; and Thu 8/22, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

One Child Nation

N Lost Gurl

Watching a film where a young person is groomed to be in an abusive relationship is a bit like watching a horror flick. You know that whatever lurks behind the proverbial door is bad news, and the heroine is screwed. In *Lost Gurl*, that heroine is Nola (played by talented Chicagoan Kristin E. Ellis), a bright teenager with plans to attend DePaul until she meets Jay (Simeon Henderson), an older man who charms her off her feet before pulling her into a world of drugs and violence. This feels like a modern update to the old-school PG-rated drama of an *ABC Afterschool Special*, and perhaps that's the point. What it lacks in plot twists and character development, it makes up for in messaging. And though violence permeates the film, director and writer Edward J. Wilson takes care to leave the most graphic bits (including sexual assault) just out of view. I hope this film becomes available to anyone who needs to see it. **—Jamie Ludwig** *70 min. Wilson and selected cast and crew attend the screenings. Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Fri 8/16 and Tue 8/20, 8:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Manos: The Hands of Fate

Drive-in delicacy from 1966, involving occult goings-on in a house controlled by the title whatsis and his harem queens. This backyard horror cheapie never made it out of El Paso, though its director, Harold P. Warren, has been touted as the Ed Wood of the Texas Panhandle. **—Pat Graham** *69 min. Wed 8/21, 7:30 PM. Beverly Arts Center*

N The Nightingale

Jennifer Kent's second feature (after *The Babadook*) is a postmodern critique of British colonialism that considers the chauvinism as well as the racism of the colonial project. Set in early 19th-century Australia, it centers on a young Irishwoman who, along with her husband, has recently finished a seven-year period of servitude on a British military base. Kent addresses early on how brutal the British were toward anyone they considered socially inferior with a harrowing scene in which soldiers gang-rape the heroine, then kill her baby and husband. The perpetrators of the attack leave the base shortly thereafter, and the heroine, teaming up with an Aboriginal tracker, follows in pursuit with the aim of taking revenge. In its focus on symbolic, violent retribution, the film is thematically similar to Quentin Tarantino's revisionist historical fantasies, though Kent's deglamorized, relentlessly unpleasant depiction of suffering couldn't be further from the adolescent glee of Tarantino's films. Still, there's something vaguely two-faced about Kent's revenge narrative—the heroine's progress has the effect of overshadowing the history of atrocity that the film wants to confront. **—Ben Sachs** *R, 136 min. Fri 8/16-Thu 8/22, 1:15, 4:10, 7, and 9:50 PM. Music Box*

RR N One Child Nation

New York-based filmmaker Nanfu Wang was born in China in 1985 during its mandated one-child policy, a stringently enforced 36-year social experiment meant to curb the nation's burgeoning population and stave off widespread famine. Wang's parents were exceptional in that they also had a son; in rural areas some families were allowed two children if the first-born was female in the hopes that the next infant would be a highly prized male. After Wang's own son was born, she journeyed back to China, baby in tow, to uncover bitter truths about the horrific practices and consequences of such state intrusion while her codirector, Jialing Zhang, remained in the U.S. to closely monitor Wang's movements via GPS in case she aroused potentially dangerous government scrutiny. The two women interviewed not only former bureaucrats, abortionists, and crusading journalists, but also Wang's own family, whose experiences during those decades included her grandfather's fight with authorities to prevent her mother being forcibly sterilized after Nanfu was born; her uncle's abandonment of a daughter in the local market; and her aunt's sale of her baby girl to a human trafficker. Some archival footage—particularly a shot of corpses of discarded female infants rotting in a public garbage dump—is gruesome, but just when you think you've seen the worst come the revelations of the corruption that mushroomed after China opened its doors in 1992 to adoptions by outsiders: the hefty fees Westerners paid orphanages (with the money trickling up and down between local civilians and officials) encouraged outright theft of babies to keep this new niche market booming. The filmmakers also follow a couple in Lehi, Utah, adoptive parents themselves, on a mission to reunite missing Chinese "orphans" with their birth parents. Not surprisingly, some adopted kids, loved by their American families, aren't interested, even if their original parents didn't give them up willingly. In English and subtitled Mandarin. **—Andrea Gronvall** *R, 85 min. Fri 8/16-Sun 8/18, 11:30 AM, 2:45, 5:30, 7:50, and 10:05 PM; Mon 8/19-Thu 8/22, 2:45, 5:30, 7:50, and 10:05 PM. Century Centre Cinema*

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RR N Where'd You Go, Bernadette

A profoundly serious film despite its lighthearted surface tone, Richard Linklater's adaptation of Maria Semple's novel is a critical (if characteristically humane) assessment of American society in spiritual crisis. Cate Blanchett stars as the title character, a trailblazing architect who hasn't designed anything in two decades; when the movie begins, she's on the verge of emotional collapse, addicted to a variety of prescription drugs, and making enemies with the women in her neighborhood's improvement league. Bernadette remains a caring wife and mother, but her closest confidante is a paid assistant based in India with whom she communicates via text message. Linklater depicts the heroine's terminal self-involvement wittily and sympathetically, making her problems (obsessing over routines, dreading face-to-face communication, and generally feeling stuck) resemble exaggerated versions of what many people experience in everyday American life circa 2019. He doesn't see these problems as insurmountable, however, and this optimism is both winning and refreshing. The ensemble supporting cast—which features Billy Crudup, Kristen Wiig, and Laurence Fishburne—is wonderful as well. **—Ben Sachs** *PG-13, 130 min. Block 37, Century Centre Cinema, Century 12 and CineArts 6*

RR While I Breathe, I Hope

"I just want to be a change agent, and politics is the way I can change people's lives," says 34-year-old Bakari Sellers in Emily L. Harrold's fly-on-the-wall portrait of the idealistic attorney, politician, and CNN commentator. At 22 years of age, he ran for office as his district's state representative and unexpectedly defeated his Republican opposition, but disillusionment soon set in. "I'm a Democrat in South Carolina, so my job is the definition of insanity, because I repeatedly do the same things over and over again, and don't accomplish much," he says of his tenure. And indeed one of his finest achievements occurred after he was out of office: while he was working as a social activist in the wake of the 2015 mass shootings at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, he and others succeeded in finally convincing the state legislature to retire the Confederate flag from the statehouse grounds. Whatever you think of Sellers, who is immensely likable, if more openly emotional than the average guy—but hey, he's hardly average—don't miss this enlightening documentary, a primer on the risks and rewards of politics, and why it's absolutely fundamental that all citizens engage in its discourse, on whatever level we can. **—Andrea Gronvall** *72 min. Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Fri 8/16, 4:15 PM, and Tue 8/20, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

ALSO PLAYING

N The Angry Birds Movie 2

Thurop Van Orman directed this sequel to the 2016 animated film based on the popular video game. *PG, 99 min. Block 37, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14, Cicero Showplace 14, Ford City, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings, 600 N. Michigan*

Bill Traylor: Chasing Ghosts

Jeffrey Wolf directed this documentary about self-taught outsider artist Bill Traylor, a former slave and sharecropper, who began drawing in the 1930s in his 80s. *76 min. Director Jeffrey Wolf and producer Jeany Wolf attend the screenings. Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Sun 8/18, 5:30 PM, and Mon 8/19, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Black History—Lost and Found

A program of four short films, with work by Khinmay Lwin van der Mee, Adetokumboh M'Cormack, David de Rozas, and Ashley Paige Brim. *Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Thu 8/22, 8:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Color Me Creative

A program of five shorts by Addison Wright, Keisha Rae Witherspoon, Elodie Edjang, the Umma Chroma collective, and David Larson and Darren Durlach. *Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Sun 8/18, 3 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

N Every Time I Die

A murdered man's consciousness inhabits the bodies of his friends as he tries to prevent their deaths at the hand of his killer. Robi Michael directed. *98 min. Fri 8/16-Sat 8/17, 7:45 PM; Sun 8/18, 6 PM; Mon 8/19-Thu 8/22, 7:45 PM. Facets Cinematheque*

N Good Boys

A trio of adolescent boys' attempt to get some makeout tips by spying on some older teens with a drone leads to a day of increasingly outrageous events in this comedy directed by Gene Stupnitsky. *R, 89 min. ArcLight, Century 12 and Cine Arts 6, Cicero 14, City North, Ford City, Lake Theatre, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings, Showplace ICON, 600 N. Michigan, Studio Movie Grill Chatham, Webster Place*

How to Survive a Plague / BPM (Beats per Minute)

An AIDS-themed double feature screening of David France's 2012 documentary *How to Survive a Plague* and Robin Campillo's 2017 French drama *BPM (Beats per Minute)*, followed by a discussion. *Sun 8/18, 5 PM. ACRE Projects* FREE

Innocents of Paris

Maurice Chevalier stars as a singing junkman who must decide between love and fame in this 1929 musical-romance. Richard Wallace directed. *78 min. 35 mm. Preceded by a selection of short subjects made in 1929 (approx. 40 min, 16 mm). Thu 8/22, 7 PM. Music Box*

N Jirga

Benjamin Gilmour directed this Australian drama about a soldier returning to Afghanistan to find the family of a civilian he killed. In English and subtitled Pushto. *78 min. Fri 8/16, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 8/17, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 8/18, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 8/19-Thu 8/22, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque*

N Kingdom

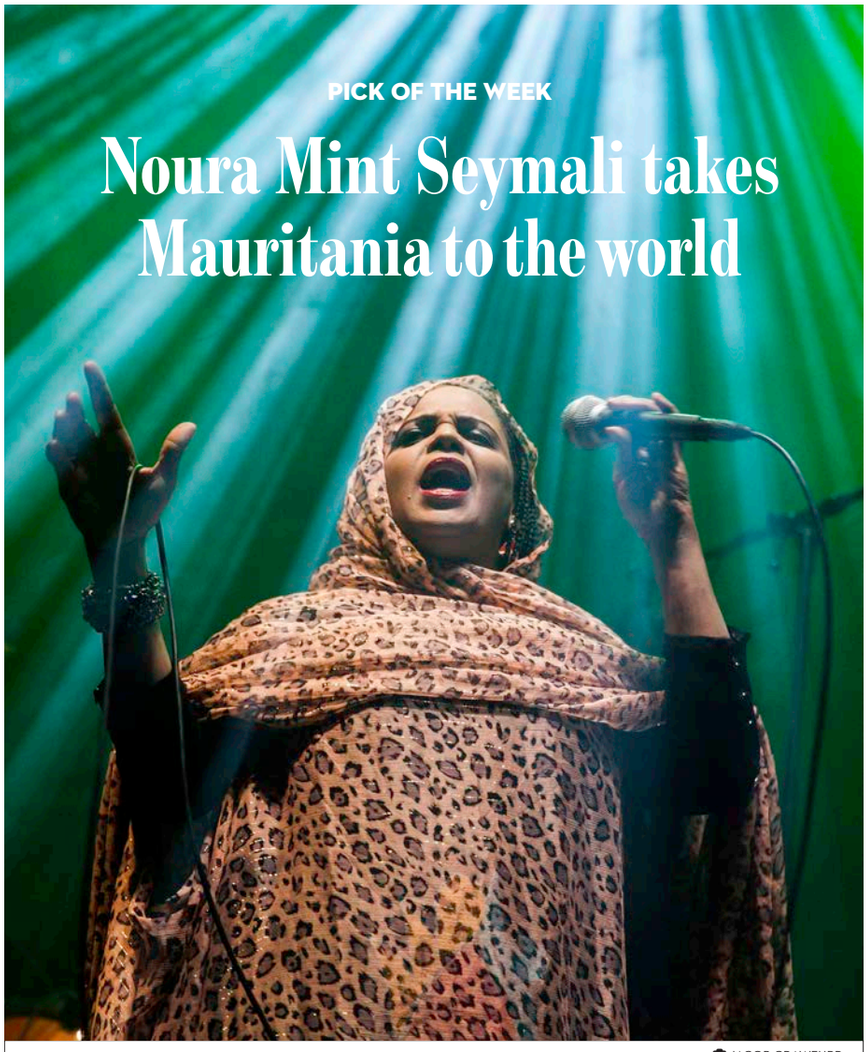
Shinsuke Sato directed this Japanese action film based on Yasuhisa Hara's manga about a boy in ancient China who aspires to become a general. In Japanese with subtitles. *R, 134 min. City North 14, River East 21*

Love African American Style

Six U.S. and UK short films about love by David E. Bright, Asha Flowers, LeRon E. Lee, Carmen Elly Wilkerson, Anthony E. Williams, and Gian Smith. *81 min. Showing as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival. Fri 8/16, 6 PM, and Sat 8/17, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Silent Summer Film Festival Weekend

The Chicago Silent Film Society presents four programs over three days of silent films with live accompaniment, including the Anna May Wong drama *Toll of the Sea*, short comedies starring Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, and the Soviet sci-fi film *Aelita: Queen of Mars*. Visit silentfilmchicago.com for more information. *Fri 8/16-Sun 8/18. Filament Theatre*



PICK OF THE WEEK

Noura Mint Seymali takes Mauritania to the world

JACOB CRAWFURD

JUPITER & OKWESS, NOURA MINT SEYMALI
Thu 8/15, 6:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph. FREE ALL

MAURITANIA DOESN'T HAVE the global pop footprint of its neighbor Senegal; its local musical culture is dominated by traditional forms played at weddings and other ceremonial venues. Noura Mint Seymali is determined to change that. The griot and singer has deep roots in Moorish and Mauritanian musical traditions: she grew up singing backup for her stepmother, legendary vocalist Dimi Mint Abba. But Seymali is also an heir to modernization: her father, Seymali Ould Ahmed Vall, pioneered a system of notation for Moorish music. With her band, she looks to the future and the past for inspiration. Seymali delivers ululating vocals and plays the *ardin* (a Moorish harp reserved for women griots) while backed by Western instruments, including drum kit, bass, and guitar. The resulting psychedelic desert fusion is as exhilarating as that of other famous Sahel bands such as Tinariwen (with whom Seymali has recorded). The group's secret weapon is Seymali's husband, Jeich Ould Chighaly, who plays an electric guitar modified to play quarter tones; it sounds like a sitar with warped strings. You can hear his idiosyncratic, instantly recognizable style at the beginning of the title track of Seymali's 2014 album, *Tzenni* (Glitterbeat), before the band kicks into a rolling, sweaty Western groove. Seymali sings with perfect, unpredictable control, stretching out and lifting out the notes before allowing them to settle back into her throat. Mauritania can't contain that voice, and neither can the rest of the world. **—NOAH BERLATSKY**

THURSDAY15

ASHBRINGER *Terranaut, Dismalimerence, and Tides/Cult open. 7 PM, Reggies' Music Joint, 2105 S. State, $10. 21+*

Minnesota-based guitarist, composer, and vocalist Nick Stanger is only 22, but he's already built a promising portfolio of heavy music. He started Ashbringer as a one-man band in 2013, released the ten-minute single "The Bitter Taste of Life's Only Certainty" in 2014 and the full-length *Vacant* the following year, and then formed a five-piece group for his second album, 2016's *Yūgen*. With their folk-inflected, dreamy sound, nods to misty ancient traditions, and devotion to themes of nature, the earth, and humankind's insignificance in the cosmos, Ashbringer are kindred spirits to contemporaries such as New Hampshire's Vattnet and Tennessee's Twilight Fauna. And they're equally able to deliver instrumental richness onstage and in the studio—the latter of which is abundantly clear on their new record, *Absolution* (Prosthetic). The prog inspirations and postrock complexity on the long tracks sometimes seem at odds with Stanger's raw vocals, but when he roars on "Shrine of Loss" and the band rises up to match his ferocity, it sounds like someone who's learned to choose their battles finally finding the one they've been waiting for. **—MONICA KENDRICK**

CHERUBS *Sweet Cobra and Salvation open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, $18. 21+*

In their brief existence, from 1991 till 1994, Cherubs gifted the world with two perfect documents of streamlined, intense, pummeling noise-rock: 1992's *Icing* and 1994's *Heroin Man* (both on King Coffey's Trance Syndicate label). The sounds the Austin trio hammered out weren't too far from what their east-coast contemporaries in Unsane were doing, and *Icing* and *Heroin Man* remain testaments to how effective rock music can be when it's no-frills, loud, and mad. Two decades after their split, Cherubs seemingly reemerged out of nowhere, and in the five years since then they've matched the productivity of their initial run. In 2015 they released their third full-length, *2 Ynfynyty* (Brutal Panda), and

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09/13 - HAMPTON YOUNT
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09/18 - TAMINO
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this summer they've kept up their impeccable streak with the brand-new *Immaculada High* (Relapse). It's a smasher of an album, furious and blown out, channeling the exact power that made Cherubs so beloved in the first place. Though most bands have a different energy after a long-awaited reunion than they did in their early days, Cherubs exude the same dark, irreverent vibe they always have. They haven't missed a beat yet, and now that noise-rock is resurgent, its masters are welcome back with open arms. —**Luca Cimarusti**

NOURA MINT SEYMALI *See Pick of the Week, page 32. Jupiter & Okwess headline. 6:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph.* FREE ALL

FRIDAY16

AJANI JONES *J-E-T-S (Jimmy Edgar & Machinedrum) headline; Ajani Jones opens. 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, $22. 18+*

After Chicago rapper Fredrick "Ajani" Jones left the University of Iowa in 2015 to focus on music, he picked up a warehouse gig in Rogers Park to help fund what he hoped would be his real career. On "Pluto," off his recent debut album, *Dragonfly* (Ajani Jones/Closed Sessions), the 25-year-old talks about pursuing his dream by working long hours at a lousy job far from home—a situation made even more exhausting by the historic structural inequality that young Black men face. "Workin' this 5 AM shift, in Rogers Park, that's daily," he raps. "Takin' the Red Line from 63rd, it would drive me crazy / Seein' those lights gave me a spark, this ain't LA baby." Jones, who grew up all over Chicago's south side and south suburbs, likes to use such autobiographical details to evoke the paradoxical love that so many Chicagoans have for a city that often seems indifferent to their existence—in its best moments, *Dragonfly* articulates the joy of building a space for yourself here. Jones's muscular, agile flow is something that authenticity-obsessed hip-hop heads and casual browsers of Spotify's "Rap Caviar" playlist can agree on. On "3D" he raps about physical and mental violence toward young Black people, with lyrics impressionistic enough for listeners to see their own stories in his. —**Leor Galil**

EXPERIMENTAL SOUND STUDIO 2019 GALA HONORING GEORGE LEWIS *George Lewis/Sam Pluta/Mwata Bowden headline; Kim Alpert & Rob Mazurek, Ken Vandermark with Claire Rousay and Macie Stewart, Angel Bat Dawid & Douglas R. Ewart, Kotoka Suzuki, and Katie Wood open. Hosted by Douglas R. Ewart. 7 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, $50-$100.* ALL

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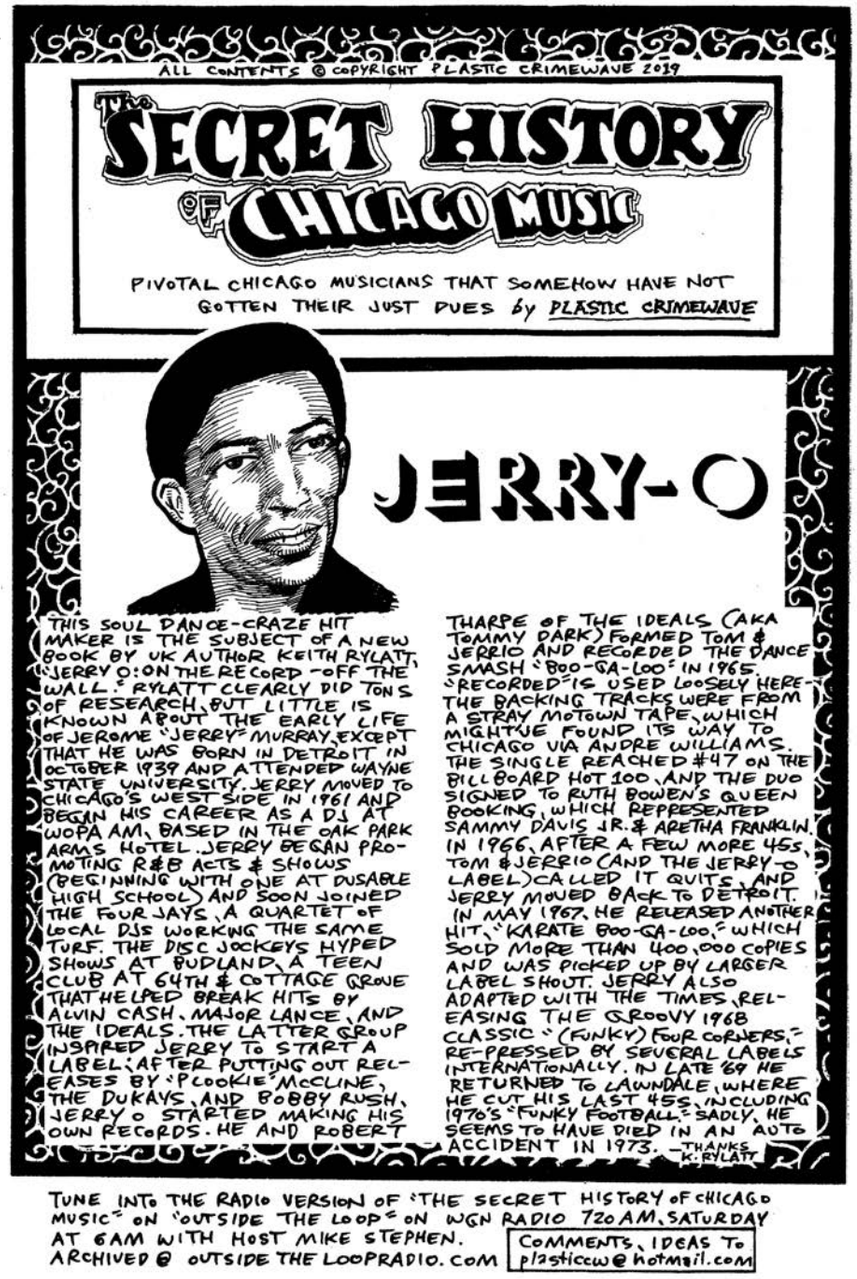
vides studio services, opportunities to perform and show work, events that facilitate dialogues between artists and audiences, and archiving resources for avant-garde and exploratory music materials that might otherwise be lost. This year's ESS gala fund-raiser has a twofold purpose: to help finance upgrades to the recording studio and to honor musician, composer, historian, and educator George E. Lewis. Currently a professor of American music at Columbia University, the 67-year-old Chicago native took classes at the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians' neighborhood school as a teen. Decades later, he told the avant-garde jazz organization's story in *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2008). Lewis has been giving workshops and performing at ESS since 1989, and he will renew his association with the organization by playing a set here with electronic musician Sam Pluta and multi-instrumentalist and AACM member Mwata Bowden. Their performance will draw together elements of Lewis's work as a scholar, composer, improvising trombonist, and pioneer in the development of interactive computer-music systems, and it won't be the only set of the evening to cross generational and disciplinary boundaries. Fellow AACM multi-instrumentalist Douglas R. Ewart will appear with singer and multi-instrumentalist Angel Bat Dawid, who recently released her first album; genre-defying experimentalist Rob Mazurek will perform with video artist Kim Alpert; and veteran clarinet and saxophone player Ken Vandermark will improvise with keyboardist and violinist Macie Stewart and new-music percussionist Claire Rousay. Sound artists Katie Wood and Kotoka Suzuki will also perform new works. —**Bill Meyer**



SATURDAY17

CRUCIAL CONFLICT *Part of the Chicago Westside Music Festival. Faith Evans headlines; Monifah, Da Brat, and Crucial Conflict open. 2-9 PM, Douglas Park, 1401 S. Sacramento.* FREE ALL

The annual Chicago Westside Music Festival brings national talent to Douglas Park while spotlighting hometown heroes. In previous editions, the free daylong event has leaned heavily on beloved mainstream R&B acts such as Bell Biv DeVoe, but the opener of this year's festival is dynamic but not-so-family-friendly Chicago hip-hop group Crucial Conflict. The group's members began honing their skills together at parties in the K-Town section of the west side in the early 90s before hitting the radio hard with the 1996 single "Hay," an ode to the kind of grass you might find yourself "smokin' in the middle of the barn," as they sing in the chorus over a sample from the 1974 Funkadelic ballad "I'll Stay." Despite the rural imagery, those lyrics actually refer to the Barn, Crucial Conflict's recording studio, storefront hangout, and community space, where they created some of the material they released later that year on their debut album, *The Final Tic*. The "old west" vibe appealed to their fans for its original mix of country and rap, and the group played up the western motif in their fashion and in other album singles, most obviously "Ride the Rodeo"—in some early interviews, they even described their music as a new genre, RODEO ("Rhymes of Dirty English Organization"). These days "Hay," which eventually reached number two on *Billboard*'s Hot Rap Songs chart, reliably makes me think of Lil Nas X's megahit "Old Town Road"—I think it would be fun if Lil Nas X and Crucial Conflict collaborated on a new track. The Chicago Westside Music Festival also features ebullient west-side native and former Kenwood Academy student Da Brat as well Monifah (a former Heavy D protege) who makes grown-up-lady R&B. Headlining is soul and R&B icon Faith Evans, whose gorgeous, world-weary, raspy mezzo-soprano could entrance a statue. —**Salem Collo-Julin**

DEAFKIDS *Neurosis headline; Bell Witch and Deafkids open. 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, $25. 17+*

For local heavy-music fans, this stacked bill—which also includes pioneering postmetal masters Neurosis and beautifully crushing doom duo Bell Witch—is among the most-anticipated concerts of the summer. But anyone planning to go should make sure to arrive in time for the Chicago debut of Brazilian trio Deafkids, who open the show. Formed in 2010, Deafkids build their songs on a base of explosive polyrhythmic percussion, over which they layer raw, frenetic combinations of punk, psych, Brazilian jazz, dub, chanting,

Deafkids JEAN RIBEIRO

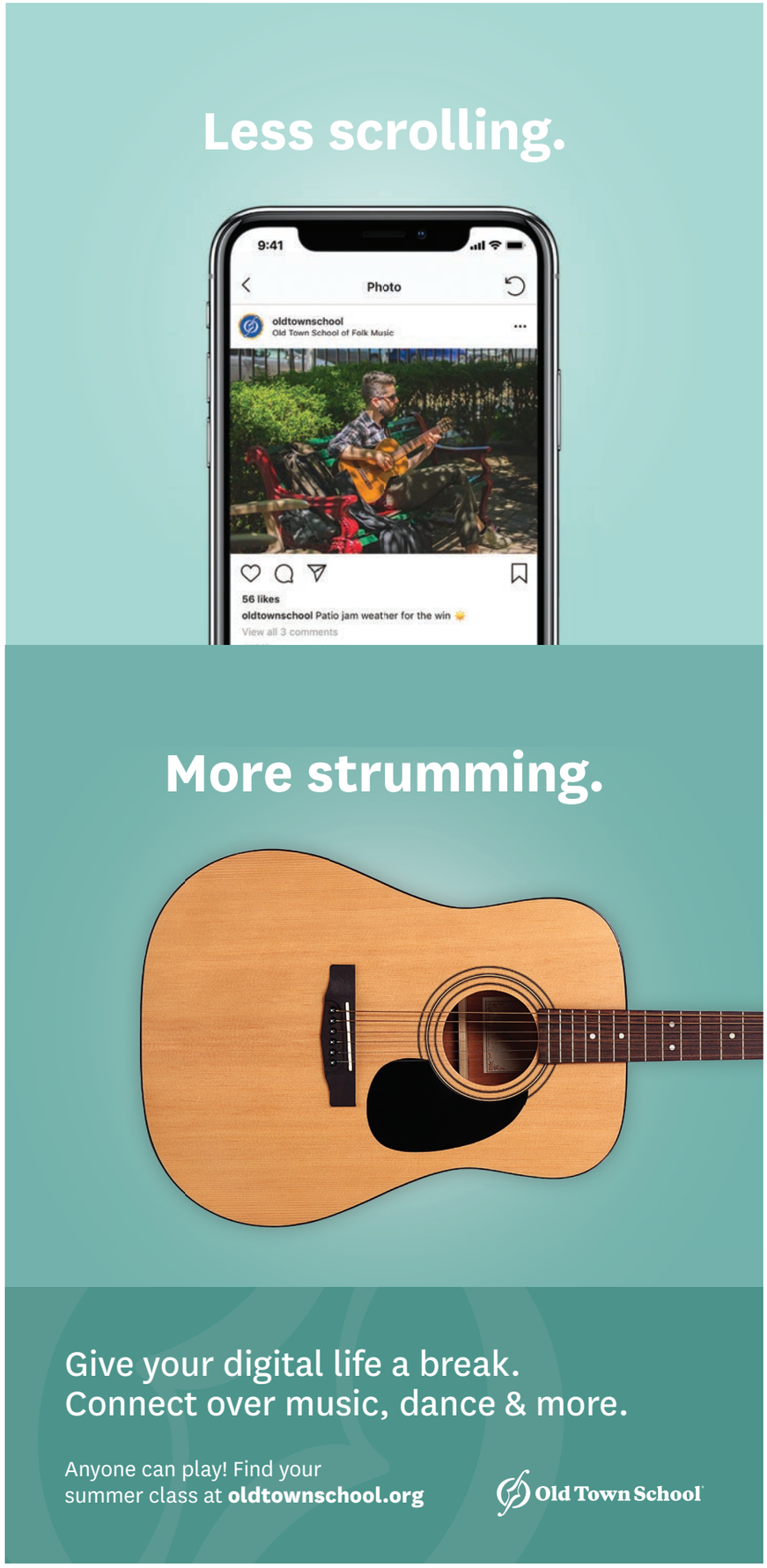
harsh noise, and more. Steve Von Till of Neurosis, who runs the Neurot label, signed the group for their recent third studio album, *Metaprogramação*, and he's described what they do as "sonic ayahuasca." This music is like rocket fuel for the most brain-bending mindfucks on the planet, no illicit substances required (actually, scratch "planet" and add outer space too). *Metaprogramação* ("Metaprogramming") questions the existence of personal freedom as constant media and government messaging tries to divide and exploit everyday people. The album urges listeners to resist such programming and strive for unity and liberation, and the way the songs seamlessly bleed into each other seems to suggest one way of accomplishing this. The band's live shows are even more incendiary than their recordings—even grouches who claim to have heard it all will have to pick their jaws up off the floor after Deafkids finish shaking the room. Before setting off on their maiden voyage through North America earlier this month, the band spent some time in São Paulo recording new material with Killing Joke's Jaz Coleman (to a "Hell, yeah!" from heavy-music freaks everywhere). Word of that release should come soon enough; in the meantime, you can let Deafkids simultaneously open and obliterate your neural pathways at Thalia Hall. **—Jamie Ludwig**

HUNX & HIS PUNX ***Part of the Rock 'n' Roll Market (see page 36). Hunx & His Punx headline; White Mystery, Blacker Face, Bev Rage & the Drinks, Clickbait, and Dead Gremmies open. DJ E2H2 and the Tangerine Beat DJs spin between sets. Noon-8 PM, East Room, 2354 N. Milwaukee, $5 suggested donation. 21+***

Hunx is the swaggering, sneering alter ego of singer Seth Bogart. He originally adopted the pseudonym as a member of San Francisco electroclash group Gravy Train!!!!, then branched off to launch his own band, the Punx, in 2008. Though the group has been through several lineup changes and a brief breakup, Bogart has found a solid creative counterpart in Shannon Shaw (also of Shannon & the Clams), with whom he shares the songwriting and singing. The band's bouffant hairdos and garish makeup, outrageous stage outfits (Bogart often wears a cheetah-print Speedo and leather jacket), and scuzzy, 50s-influenced punk vibe give them a DIY campiness that would make John Waters proud. Though they haven't dropped a track since 2017's girl-group-inspired "Baby of the Band," their two full-lengths tell a sort of queer coming-of-age story through sugary vocal harmonies, a mix of punk, hardcore, and doo-wop influences, and lyrics about cruising, crushing, and necking. The title track of their debut studio album, 2011's *Too Young to Be in Love* (Hardly Art), begins with a charmingly simplistic plea to a potential lover: "Why won't you do it with me / I want to do it with you." But even when Hunx & His Punx toe the line between naive and explicit, they hit on the sticky-sweet sincerity of a teenager ready to have their heart stomped on. The band are headlining the fifth annual Do312 Rock 'n' Roll Market, a daylong garage and punk minifest that also features vintage and DIY vendors—if you're on the hunt for a cheetah Speedo of your own, this could be the place to score one. **—Megan Kirby**

MATT MUSE ***Ausar, Loona Dae, DJ Cash Era open. 8 PM, Schubas, 3159 N. Southport, $15.***

Chicago rapper Matt Muse first studied his craft through mentorship nonprofit Art of Culture (back when it was still called Donda's House), but he didn't begin performing in earnest until he started classes at Northern Illinois University in the early 2010s. "That played a huge role in helping me improve my performance skills," Muse told Passion of the Weiss in September. "What college is supposed to be, a practice before you get to the real world, it was that for my music." Muse says he played hundreds of shows while at NIU, and since graduating in 2016 he's been making his career in Chicago. Over the past few years he's served as a teaching artist at Young Chicago Authors, which has helped bring him deeper into the city's overlapping hip-hop and literary scenes—and his new self-re- →



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Sun Kil Moon

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 8PM
Tracy Grammer
with special guest Heather Styka • In Szold Hall

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 6PM
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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 8PM
Amy Speace In Szold Hall

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 8PM
Delbert McClinton
with special guest Gerald Dowd

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 7PM
Crash Test Dummies
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MUSIC

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Gauche JEN DESSINGER

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leased EP, *Love & Nappyness*, which he celebrates with this concert, demonstrates his growth as a rapper and writer. With this second installation in his Nappy series (following last year's *Nappy Talk*), Muse set out to explore five different types of love. That approach provided him with a way to focus his insightful lyricism and gave him room to show off his growth as a vocalist. His rapping takes a sensual turn on "Love Wrong [Eros]," where he holds on to syllables flirtatiously, edging toward outright singing. And on "Shotgun [Philia]" he rides a fine line, bringing the affable feel of the rest of the EP to his bellicose, borderline-staccato rapping. On the silky funk number "Myself (Philautia II)," Muse confidently sings a warmhearted hook before busting out flamboyant, rapid-fire verses about self-love—evidence that he's committed to continuing to grow. —LEOR GALIL

SUNDAY18

GAUCHE *Pledge Drive and Primitive Teeth open. 8 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, $10. 17+*

D.C. postpunk unit Gauche exemplify their hometown DIY scene—partly because it seems like everyone in that tight-knit community is connected to the band. Singer and multi-instrumentalist Daniele Yandel drums in Priests and helps runs the Sister Polygon label; vocalist and bassist Mary Jane Regalado, who plays in Providence group Downtown Boys, also performs with two members of Gauche (keyboardist Pearie Sol and guitarist Jason P. Barnett) in D.C. band Cool People. In 2016 Sol released a solo cassette of "organ punk" recordings through Sister Polygon, and Barnett is also in Flamers. Yandel, Regalado, Sol, and Barnett launched Gauche in late 2014, and bassist and drummer Laurie Spector (of Foul Swoops and Hothead) joined before their 2015 debut EP, *Get Away With Gauche*. Since then, they've further fleshed out their sound by adding saxophonist and vocalist Adrienne Berry (a touring member of Downtown Boys) and recruiting a rotating cast of friends in their writing and recording process. (As Regalado told Bandcamp in July, "We're kind of a collective.") Unsurprisingly, when Gauche bust out a shout-along chorus in one of their skeletal, dance-focused songs, it can feel like everyone on the eastern seaboard has joined in. On their recent debut full-length, *A People's History of Gauche* (Merge), the band confront patriarchal privilege, economic hardship, and technological dystopia atop zigzagging guitars, nimble funk rhythms, and whimsical, melodic keyboard and sax. Anyone marginalized by capitalism or just plain priced out of a place they've called home should find at least one song on the album that resonates so strongly they'll want to yell the chorus along with Gauche. —LEOR GALIL

WEDNESDAY21

SURABHI ENSEMBLE *8 PM, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph, $15-$22.* ALL

The Surabhi Ensemble was founded in 2010 by Indian veena player Saraswathi Ranganathan, director of the Ensemble of Ragas School of Performing Arts in Schaumburg and "Best Asian Entertainer of the Year," according to the 2018 Chicago Music Awards. The core of the group has included fellow local musical luminaries such as Spanish flamenco guitarist Carlo Basile, tabla master Dhananjay Kunte, and percussionist Bob Garrett. About five years ago, the Surabhi Ensemble expanded to include oud player Ronnie Malley and bassist

FESTIVALS

Celebrate sangria, rock 'n' roll, and Chicago neighborhoods at this weekend's festivals

3 YARDS BANGIN'
The ultimate backyard party (even though it's not in a backyard anymore), 3 Yards Bangin' celebrates its 15th year with an international bill of house music, including sets from Brian Furious Frazier and DJ Mello Sounds. *Sat 8/17, 3-11 PM, 8600 S. Anthony, $10-15.* FREE ALL

CHICAGO WESTSIDE MUSIC FESTIVAL
See Crucial Conflict, page 34. *Sat 8/17, 2-9 PM, Douglas Park, 1401 S. Sacramento.* FREE ALL

PILSEN FEST
Live music, Latino culture, and karaoke converge at this celebration of diversity, solidarity, and unity. Musical guests include Mexican groups Sussie 4 and Los Masters Plus. *Sat 8/17 and Sun 8/18, noon-10 PM, 18th and Blue Island, donation suggested.* FREE ALL

ROCK 'N' ROLL MARKET
This garage-rock parking-lot party features oodles of DIY and vintage vendors, food trucks, hot local bands and DJs, and a headlining set by Hunx & His Punx (see page 35). *Sat 8/17, noon-8 PM, East Room, 2354 N. Milwaukee, $5 suggested donation. 21+*

SANGRIA FESTIVAL
Start with 20 types of sangria, add flamenco dancers, games, pop-up vendors, and a mix of international artists and DJs, and you might never want to leave this lawn party. *Sat 8/17 and Sun 8/18, noon-10 PM, 3021 W. Division, $15-$55. 21+*

Surabhi Ensemble JOHN BOEHM

Greg Neergard, and more recently it's incorporated modern and Indian dancer Kinnari Vora and flamenco dancer Leticia Aravena. Along with virtuosic musicianship, the Surabhi Ensemble is known for its activist mission: to demonstrate connections between cultures and how togetherness can create positivity. Earlier this year, the Surabhi Ensemble brought its art and message to Vietnam, Portugal, Spain, and Senegal through the group's Global Peace Tour, performing in schools, community and immigrant centers, and concert venues, and collaborating with local artists along the way. This concert celebrates the collaborations that occurred during the tour. Along with the core musicians and dancers, joining the Surabhi Ensemble onstage will be two guests who performed with it during its travels: master mridangam artist Ragavan Sai of Chennai, India, who joined the group in Vietnam, and talking-drum master Massamba Diop (whose work appears on the *Black Panther* soundtrack), who hosted the band in Dakar, Senegal. A third guest musician for this concert is Tokyo-born Chicago violinist Emi Tanabe, who will improvise on a number of pieces and add some traditional Japanese melodies to the program. The ensemble will debut some new collaborative works, including a veil dance by Basile, Garrett, and Vora that combines original music and dance with a traditional Hindustani raga and improvised sections that should highlight Sai and Diop. Other pieces will showcase the Surabhi Ensemble's delicately textured fusions, shaded with pulsing oud notes, shimmering veena chords, and crystalline Arabic-influenced flamenco guitar, all backed by tapestries of rolling, intricate percussion and accompanied by architectural dance forms. A background video will display moments from the tour, while the group itself shares the fruits of a journey that connected the best of Chicago's global sounds with musical cultures in other parts of the world. —Catalina Maria Johnson

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SAM I AM THE MC
ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN

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312unes presents
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THE BOUNCING SOULS
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FRIDAY AUG 23 / 7PM / ALL AGES
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FRIDAY SEP 06 / 7:30PM / ALL AGES
+ SATURDAY SEP 07 / 7:30PM / ALL AGES
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PINKY PINKY

WEDNESDAY SEP 11 / 8PM / ALL AGES
Virginity Rocks World Tour 2
DANNY DUNCAN

THURSDAY SEP 12 / 6:30PM / ALL AGES
Riot Fest welcomes
An Official Riot Fest Pre-Show with
THE AQUABATS
KOO KOO KANGA ROO / MC LARS

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Riot Fest welcomes
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EMO NIGHT BROOKLYN
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PINK SWEAT$

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09/16 REVOCATION & VOIVOD
09/19 – 09/22 COLD WAVES VIII
09/23 WILDER WOODS
09/26 MELVINS / REDD KROSS
10/04 GUS DAPPERTON
10/05 EMOTIONAL ORANGES
10/09 BOY HARSHER

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JOHN SIMMONS

SATURDAY AUG 17
The Soft Machine with
MOZHGAN
JUSTIN AULIS LONG
GREY PEOPLE

SUNDAY AUG 18
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ALL ALL AGES FREE

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NEW

'68, Inspector Cluzo, Messenger Birds 9/18, 6 PM, Cobra Lounge ALL
Art Alexakis of Everclear 10/8, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Aquabats, Koo Koo Kanga Roo, MC Lars 9/12, 6:30 PM, Metro ALL
Ayokay 10/23, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 8/16, 18+
Subrata Bhattacharya & Abhisek Lahiri, Lucio Feuillet Quinteto 9/11, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Bijou 10/3, 10 PM, Spy Bar
Taska Black 10/12, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Chameleons Vox, Theatre of Hate 10/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Champagne Drip, Luzcid, Krilla 11/29, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Circa Tapes (live), 2Lanes, Obe, JS Alvarez 9/12, 10 PM, Smart Bar FREE
Cock Sparrer 9/14, 10 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+
Cofresi, Megan Hamilton, Good Sex 9/28, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Collie Buddz, Keznamdi 11/20, 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM, 18+
Creative Music Media Summit 8/27, 10 AM, Harold Washington College FREE ALL
Deacon Blues: the All-Star Tribute to Steely Dan 12/21, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston ALL
Dear Hunter 11/8, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 8/16, 17+
Elder Brother, Speak Low if You Speak Love 9/28, 6:15 PM, Cobra Lounge ALL
Feast Festival with Bonita Appleblunt, Selah Say, Stepchild, Attack the Sound, Deem, and more 9/7, 1 PM, Homan Square Park FREE ALL
Sammy Figueroa & His Latin Jazz Explosion 10/9, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Sawyer Fredericks 1/19/20, 7 PM, City Winery ALL
Full Terror Assault 2019 pre-party with Crisix, Meet the Mailman, and more 9/5, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Funtcase, Ubur 12/6, 8:30 PM, Park West, 18+
Beppe Gambetta 9/18, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Mary Gauthier 12/14, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Ghostemane, 3Teeth, Horus the Astroneer, Parv0 11/5, 6:30 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Goose 12/12, 9 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM
Vivian Green 10/11, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery ALL
Half Alive, Sure Sure 10/12, 8 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Dante Hall 9/9, 8 PM, City Winery ALL
Hot Snakes 9/14, 11 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Indigenous Peoples Day Concert Chicago with Frank Waln, Nufolk Rebel Alliance, Opliam 10/16, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Julia Jacklin, Christian Lee Hutson 11/15, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 8/16, 9 AM ALL
Eilen Jewell 10/25, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston ALL
John 5 & the Creatures, Jared James Nichols, Reverend Jack 11/2, 7 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+
Rickie Lee Jones 10/20, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music ALL
Booker T. Jones 11/14, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 8/16, noon ALL
Just Friends, Save Face, Sonder Bombs, Candy Pop 9/27, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge ALL
Kaskade Redux 9/20, 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Tue 8/20, 10 AM, 18+
Stephen Kellogg 12/18, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 8/16, noon ALL
Nikki Lane 10/14, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Louis the Child, Cool Kids, Duckwrth 11/29, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM, 17+
Louis the Child, Kami, Duckwrth, Ilo Ilo 11/30, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM, 17+
Madeon 11/21, 10:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Mames Babegenush 9/4, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Emel Mathlouthi 10/2, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music FREE ALL
Mesck, Juss B, Myxed Up, Qilin, Ceol 10/4, 8 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 18+
Midwest Live & Loud 2019 day one with Traditionals, Old Firm Casuals, and more 8/30, 5 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Midwest Live & Loud 2019 day two with Hub City Stompers, Wisdom in Chains, and more 8/31, 2 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Midwest Live & Loud 2019 day three with Monty Neysmith & the Bishops, Antagonizers ATL, and more 9/1, 2 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Midwest Live & Loud 2019 Pre Party with Fuerza Bruta, Victory, Brick Assassin, Law/Less, Udüsic 8/29, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Mud Morganfield 12/26, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
PJ Morton 11/16, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM, 18+
Musiq Soulchild 12/19-12/20, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 8/16, noon ALL
Nana Grizol, Lee Bains III & the Glory Fires 10/1, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM
Nao, Jean Deaux 8/23, 7 PM, Metro ALL
Michael Nau 11/14, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston ALL
Nebula, Sasquatch, Cloud Cruiser, Purepilot 9/11, 7 PM, Reggies' Music Joint
Nocturna ft. Bellwether Syndicate (live), Autumn (live), DJ Scary Lady Sarah 8/24, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Oktave's tenth anniversary with Carl Craig, Jeff Derringer 10/5, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Omni 10/25, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Carl Palmer's ELP Legacy 11/1, 7 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, on sale Fri 8/16, noon, 17+
Tom Paxton & the Don Juans 10/25, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music ALL
Maisie Peters, Jack Gray 10/16, 7 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 8/16, 11 AM ALL
J. Phlip, Paul Johnson, Duke Shin 9/27, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Plaid 12/14, 9 PM, Sleeping Village, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM
Pvris 9/13, 11 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Rachael & Vilray 11/1, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music ALL
Adam Rafferty, Michael J. Miles 12/22, 1 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Ravenswood Winds 11/4, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Riot Fest Late Night Show with Emo Night Brooklyn and more 9/13, 10:30 PM, Metro, 18+
Ruel, Destiny Rogers 10/19, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
Sea of Treachery, Aethere, Foxbat 9/7, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Skegss 11/12, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge ALL
Space Laces, Must Die 10/11, 8:30 PM, Park West, 18+
Svdden Death 1/10/20, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Teen Top 10/30, 7:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 8/23, 11 AM, 17+
Louie Vega 11/8, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Venom Prison, Homewrecker, Call of the Void, Knaaves 9/22, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
The Wailers 10/11, 7:30 and 9:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music ALL
Windy Fest with Bianca Shaw, Stunt Taylor, Ross Mac, Ausar, Ami, Booman Forever, Isaiahg, Can Can, Tony Famous, Aaliyah Allah, Yana Renea, Hakim Dough, Richdapitt, Weswill, and more 9/1, 2 PM, the Lab on Lake ALL
Wingtips (DJ set) release party for *Exposure Therapy* 8/22, 10 PM, Late Bar FREE
Wonder Years 10/20, 6 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 8/16, 10 AM ALL
YFN Lucci 9/24, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

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UPDATED

Vic Mensa, Jesse 9/6, 8 PM, the Vic, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase
Purple Mountains, Bill MacKay 8/24-8/25, 9 PM, Sleeping Village, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase

UPCOMING

Agnostic Front, Prong, Uglybones 9/19, 7 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+
Black Flag 8/25, 11 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 18+
Blackalicious 8/24, 7 PM, Subterranean
Bottle Rockets 9/27, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Boy & Bear, Stu Larsen 9/23, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Brain Tentacles, Child Bite 9/4, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Coolio 9/28, 6:30 PM, Patio Theater
Dark Star Orchestra 9/26, 7:30 PM, the Vic, 18+
Drax Project 9/8, 7 PM, Chop Shop
Jessica Hernandez & the Deltas, Cell Phones 8/31, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Cody Jinks, Sunny Sweeney 8/22, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Jacob Jolliff Band 8/23, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Joyryde 8/24, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Chrisette Michele 9/27, 8 PM, Patio Theater
Pink Sweats 9/14, 7 PM, Metro ALL
Tropical Fuck Storm 9/14, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

WOLF BY KEITH HERZIK

GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

EXPERIMENTAL PRODUCER Matthew Sage has run the **Patient Sounds** label for ten years, starting in Fort Collins, Colorado, and moving to Chicago five years ago. He's released crucial tapes from Japanese footwork producer **Foodman** and Minneapolis ambient artist **Lee Noble**, as well as his own work as **M. Sage**. But Sage has decided to shut the label down. "Streaming is crazy, and I'm having a hard time adapting with the model I set the label up on," he says. "I'm just gonna stop while doing the best work I think we've done." On Wednesday, August 21, Patient Sounds throws a farewell party at the **Hideout**. The bill includes Noble, Missouri guitarist **Lake Mary**, and Sage himself, backed by a few friends ("like a jazz quartet playing noise music," he says). The first 100 fans get a copy of a new, hour-long Patient Sounds CD sampler. "I keep picturing it as a family reunion," Sage says, "but it's one of those family reunions where you meet up in the hospital where someone's dying."

Local singer-songwriter **Andrew Smith** (maybe you've seen him advertising on a lamppost) has self-released heaps of material since 2015, including lo-fi solo tapes, ambient recordings, and plenty of profound pop under the name **Jungle Green**. In fall 2017, he and his band made the brand-new ***Runaway With Jungle Green*** at the LA studio of Foxygen's **Jonathan Rado**, and it's easily Smith's best work—the hushed, intimate vocals and lovely melody of lead single "Cryin'" are worthy of Elliott Smith. On Saturday, August 17, Jungle Green celebrate at the **Hideout** with the Hecks and Peeper & Le Play.

Local goth-pop duo **Wingtips** have been dropping singles from their debut album, ***Exposure Therapy*** (Artoffact), and the latest, "Here and Now," captures the irresistible disintegration and woozy depths of the Cure's late-80s sound. The LP drops Friday, August 23, and Wingtips members **Vincent Segretario** and **Hannah Avalon** DJ a listening party at **Late Bar** the night before. **—J.R. Nelson and Leor Galil**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

2019

UPCOMING SHOWS

HOUSE OF BLUES

8.13 Miyavi
8.15 Strangelove: The Depeche Mode Experience
8.16 SIGMA LXXXV TOUR: The Alarm w/ Modern English & Jay Aston's Gene Loves Jezebel
Presented by cricket wireless
8.17 I AM FEST
Blink 182 Tribute: Blank 281, Thomas Nicholas Band, The Foons, Rub n' Alc, Jebediah and the Springfields, Soul Daddy, Malört & Savior
8.23 Lil Duval
8.24 The Adicts
8.29 Leoni Torres
8.30 Goldfinger w/ Big Dan and The Kids Table & Planet Smashers
9.6 Pentagon
9.7 Here Come The Mummies
9.8 Burna Boy
9.13 Nahko and Medicine for the People w/ Nattali Rize
9.17 The Noise Presents Periphery w/ Veil of Maya & Covet
9.21 101WKQX Presents Angels & Airwaves LOW TICKET WARNING
9.22 The Band Camino w/Valley
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9.27 Blackberry Smoke + The Record Company 9.28 Blackberry Smoke + The Record Company

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8.21 SURABHI ENSEMBLE GLOBAL PEACE TOUR
8.25 HOWARD HEWETT OF SHALAMAR
8.26 PETER COLLINS
8.30 MPG - MELISSA POLINAR, JEREMY PASSION AND GABE BONDOC
9.1 THE LOTUS KINGS TRIBUTE TO SANTANA
9.2 LABOR DAY PARTY WITH SANDRA ANTONGIORGI, DJ SADIE WOODS & MORE!
9.3 LEAHY
9.4 PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE

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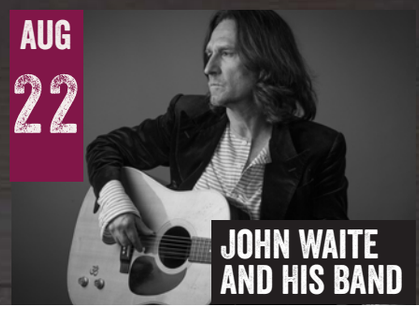
8.23 MAX WEINBERG'S JUKEBOX
9.5-6 BRIAN MCKNIGHT
9.7 FRANK ORRALL (OF POI DOG PONDERING)
9.8 STEPHANE WREMBEL BAND THE DJANGO EXPERIMENT
9.9 DANTE HALL
9.10 BERLIN FEATURING TERRI NUNN
9.11 CHELY WRIGHT & ALICE PEACOCK
9.12 LAITH AL-SAADI
9.15 ROSS MATHEWS PRESENTS DRAGTASTIC BUBBLY BRUNCH
9.15 SMELLS LIKE NIRVANA
9.16 RHETT MILLER (OF OLD 97S)
9.17 GLENN JONES
9.18 DAVID COOK
9.20 RONNIE BAKER BROOKS
9.22 CECE PENISTON
9.23 ROGER CLYNE ACOUSTIC
9.25 GREG LASWELL
9.29 BILLY COBHAM CROSSWINDS PROJECT FEAT. RANDY BRECKER



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OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

Shrinking in Seattle

A 54-year-old finds to his horror that his junk has lost a couple inches. WTF? Plus: all-body multiple orgasms for men?

By Dan Savage

Q: I'm an otherwise healthy male of 54. When I was a teen, my cock measured about six and a half inches. Not small, not huge, pretty average. I never kept track of the situation down south, but suddenly I find my junk reports in just over four inches. WTF? Is this normal? Do men lose size/girth as they age? I'm only 54! How much more do I have to lose before 60? And beyond? I'm single now and suddenly I'm afraid to be intimate with women I formerly would have embraced without a second thought out of embarrassment. My confidence is at an all-time low. I'm actually afraid to ask anyone out for fear of "exposing" the evidence. I assume there are no pills for this, but please tell me there are options. —Shrinking in Seattle

A: "We have to make a distinction between observed penile length and actual penile length," said Dr. Ashley Winter, a board-certified urologist in Portland, Oregon. "Penis length changes in real time based on a number of factors, factors that include level of arousal, stress, and ambient temperature. For this reason, researchers like to limit variability by measuring the 'stretched flaccid length' in a warm room."

Needless to say, most men aren't observing—much less measuring—their dicks when they're soft.

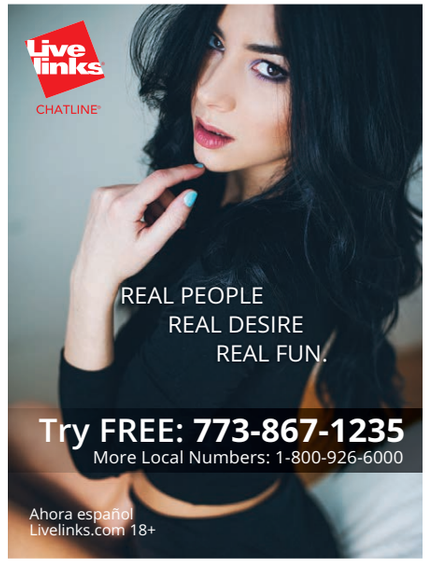
"We know that almost ZERO home dick measurements are done in the flaccid state," said Dr. Winter. "But unless SIS jotted down the room temp or precise level of arousal when he measured his teenage penis, it's unlikely he's comparing apples to apples. Another issue—and a far less appreciated one—is that the penis is anchored to the undersurface of your pel-

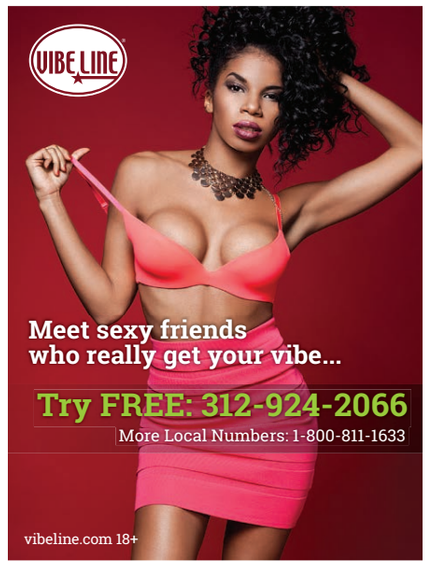
vic bones, so nearly one-half of the average penis length is 'hidden' along the undersurface of the pelvis."

There's a very special tendon—the suspensory ligament—that runs from the base of your penis to your pelvis. In addition to providing you with some degree of control when you're erect, SIS, the suspensory ligament also holds some of your dick up and inside the body. Men who want their cocks to look larger when they're soft and who don't mind if their hard cocks are harder to control or flop around during intercourse will sometimes have this suspensory ligament cut, which causes the penis to "drop." Their cocks aren't as useful for sex, it's true, but there's more "observable" cock for other men to admire in locker rooms and at urinals.

"The most dramatic cause of lost 'observed' penile length with aging is weight gain," said Dr. Winter. "As the average guy gains weight, more of his fixed penile length gets hidden, as the crucial sit-bone-to-skin distance gets longer."

So your dick may not be any smaller than it was in your teens, SIS; it's just that more of it may be hidden inside your now-mid- →





OPINION

continued from 41

dle-aged body thanks to weight gain and that damn ligament.

But hey, let's say you're no thicker today than you were in your teens and that your arousal levels are constant and that you've kept your apartment at a constant temperature over the decades. Could something be causing your cock to actually shrink?

"The main causes of actual penis shrinkage are having your prostate removed, Peyronie's disease (plaque development that narrows or bends the penis), or the scarring of erectile tissue, something called corporal fibrosis. SIS would know if he'd had prostate surgery, and he would have a noticeable 'lump' or change in erection shape if he had Peyronie's. So the main concern here is corporal fibrosis. It can be insidious and is usually associated with conditions that make blood vessels unhealthy—like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. SIS says he's healthy, but the penis is often the first body part to manifest signs of the above conditions because it is so dynamic. Which means the penis, wonderfully and tragically, is often the 'canary in the coal mine' for cardiovascular health."

Let's say your canary is shrinking, SIS. What can you do about it?

"First and foremost, he should realize that far less women would care about his penis length than he does," said Dr. Winter. "Studies including 52,000 individuals showed that 85 percent of women were satisfied with their partners' penile length, while only 55 percent of men were satisfied with their own length."

And unlike you, SIS, the women you sleep with today aren't going to be comparing the dick you've got now with the dick you had (or thought you had) then.

"But if SIS wants to maximize his 'observed' penile length, he should shed extra weight—if he's overweight—and should also check in with his doc for a test of his cholesterol, blood pressure, and a diabetes screen," said Dr. Winter. "Regular erections do help keep the penis healthy, so if he has some ED, a Viagra (or similar med) can preserve length."

Q: I am 66 years old and a gay man. After a very promiscuous youth, I have settled down a lot as far as sex and mostly just masturbate, with a trip to the baths every few months. I have a question about orgasms. I have noted, since I've gotten older, that my orgasm from masturbation is very intense and seems to last about five minutes after I ejaculate, during which I feel orgasmic feelings in my penis, legs, and sometimes my whole body. I've never had this before. Is this normal? —Mr. Sixty Fucking Six

A: "The question of normalcy in sexual function is hammered into us from the start—but it's pejorative and irrelevant," said Dr. Winter. "As a physician, the relevant question here is: 'Does MSFS find this distressing or harmful?' It doesn't sound like five-minute total-body masturbation-induced orgasms are painful for MSFS, nor are they interfering with his day-to-day quality of life. So by definition they are 'nothing to worry about.' Furthermore, they are not the harbinger of any dangerous medical condition. As you like to say, Dan, this is more of a 'YAHTZEE!' than a problem."

Anecdotal evidence—my own, a huge pile of it, gathered over the years—indicates that you're something of an outlier, MSFS; most of the older men I hear from with questions about their orgasms are concerned about their slow and steady deterioration, MSFS, not their sudden improvement. (Erections are harder to get, their orgasms are less intense, and their jizz is less abundant.)

But even if this isn't a problem—even if this is a yahtzee—what might be going on?

"That's the far more interesting question: Why is this happening?" said Dr. Winter. "I don't have a lot of quotable studies on that one, but I have a few thoughts. First off, this may have nothing to do with age and everything to do with his position. Contraction of the muscles in the pelvis, thighs (even calves!), and the muscles at the base of the penis (or clitoris) can contribute to strength of erection and intensity of orgasm, and certain positions may allow more effective muscle 'recruitment.' So differences in position or stance during partnered versus masturbatory activities may hold clues for MSFS."

Another possible explanation—and another definite "Yahtzee!"—is that you're ever so suddenly multiorgasmic.

"While it is more common for women to be multiorgasmic, there are men who can do this too," said Dr. Winter. "Longer duration of arousal—common with porn watching—and certain medications that prevent prolactin surge in the brain and strong Kegels (those muscles again!) may lead to the 'condensed multiorgasm,' a phenomenon that may fit the description MSFS is providing."

But finally and again, MSFS, so long as those powerful, long-lasting, all-body orgasms aren't diminishing your quality of life, they're nothing to worry about.

Enjoy!

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STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location: District 4 Court, Cook County, IL - County Division - 608 Beach Ave., La Grange, IL 60526 Case Type: Name Change from Carey Anne Robin Ho to Kerri Aisling Martin. Case Initiation Date 07/30/2019 Court Date 10/01/2019 at 9:30am 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, IL in Courtroom #0112 Case # 20194005032 (08/22)

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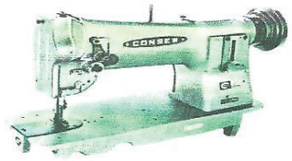

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